

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

**For the week of March 19-23, 2007**

### **DELTA ISSUES:**

**Panel to form vision for the Delta's future; Task force to consider environmental conditions, water needs in expansive report to be delivered by the end of 2007**

***Contra Costa Times* – 3/2/07**

**By Mike Taugher, staff writer**

A panel charged with recommending a new strategy for the Delta met for the first time Thursday, inaugurating an effort to address an array of problems in the fragile region.

The new "Delta Vision" task force was asked by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to make recommendations by the end of this year on goals for the Delta's future. Among the snarl of issues facing the panel is the highly charged question of whether water for 23 million Californians should continue to be delivered through the Delta or whether a canal or pipe should be built to circumvent the environmentally sensitive waterway.

A recent report from the Public Policy Institute of California suggested that the state must either dramatically reduce its reliance on Delta water or build a structure to deliver drinking and agricultural water from upstream intakes around the Delta.

A similar idea was defeated 25 years ago after it was characterized as an environmentally destructive "water grab" by Southern California.

The institute's report, written by a group of scientists with expertise on the Delta, is likely to carry substantial weight with the task force.

The panel is expected to make recommendations on new construction in the Delta, which is under intense development pressure, and how best to protect an impressive array of pipelines, aqueducts, transmission lines, highways, railways and gas storage facilities in the Delta.

The Delta Vision process launched this week is the state's response to the failure of past policies to manage the Delta as a viable ecosystem and the single largest source of drinking water in the world.

Enough water for about 12 million households is pumped out of the Delta, but that practice has taken a toll on its crashing ecosystem. Also, its levees are fragile, and water quality has worsened.

Joe Grindstaff, who heads the foundering Delta effort, said a plan finalized in 2000 that called for the dual goals of sustained water deliveries and a healthy ecosystem was probably doomed from the beginning.

"Those two (water pumping and ecosystem restoration) appear to be incompatible objectives, but they were the objectives," Grindstaff said.

Sunne Wright McPeak, a former Contra Costa supervisor who was heavily involved in crafting the plan, said it was the execution of the plan, not the plan itself, that failed.

"The plan never was implemented," she said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Nevertheless, there is general agreement that the state's Delta policies failed, and recent scientific data have highlighted the Delta's fragility. For example, new studies show the Delta's aging levees are more vulnerable to failure than previously understood.

"You have a recognition that this system is under stress. As currently configured, it's not sustainable in the long term," Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman told the panel.

"You had a recognition a year, year and a half ago, that this process wasn't working. Tougher decisions had to be made," he added. ###

### **Environmental alternatives -- Delta habitat preserve search looks to Solano**

***Fairfield Republic – 3/19/07***

**By Barry Eberling, staff writer**

FAIRFIELD - Solano County could play a key role in preserving habitat for the troubled Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, despite being only on the periphery of this major state water source and environmental haven.

But various county groups want emerging habitat restoration ideas to take into account local concerns. For example, new tidal wetlands could mean more decaying vegetation near pumps that bring delta water to local cities.

"In general, there are some water-quality concerns with those type of projects," Solano County Water Agency General Manager David Okita said.

Solano County is on the western edge of the delta, which peters out near Rio Vista amid vast tracts of rural farmland. Yet the county has such areas as Suisun Marsh, which technically isn't even the delta, the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough.

With the heart of the delta facing flooding and other challenges, some researchers are looking to these Solano County areas to recreate the historic, natural delta habitats.

"It is also quite likely that money invested in these adjacent areas will produce a bigger return in ecological value on a per-dollar basis than money spent on interior delta projects," says a February report by the Public Policy Institute of California called "Envisioning Futures for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta."

### **Trouble in delta heartland**

The delta is the chokepoint of massive state and federal water systems serving vast Central Valley farms and Southern California metropolises, as well as Solano County. It's also a farming center in its own right, a recreation hot spot and an environmental haven.

Farmers a century ago put up levees in the delta to create dry land. Peat soils in the central and southern delta subsided behind levees, in some areas more than 15 feet below sea level. Earthquakes, rising sea levels because of climate change and other factors could cause levee failure, flooding delta islands, the report said.

"From an ecological point of view, it is unclear what can or will be done to islands in these areas to benefit the species of concern, given the high likelihood of uncontrolled flooding," it said.

Much of the Solano County locations are behind levees, also. But the subsidence is less. Places such as Suisun Marsh have fewer non-native invasive species, perhaps because of its brackish waters. The

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Solano County locations are far from the huge pumps that take water to canals leading to the Central Valley and Southern California.

### **Cache Slough near Solano water pumps**

One Solano County area targeted by the report for restoration is the Cache Slough region north of Rio Vista. This includes Liberty Island, an area that flooded when levees broke during the 1998 storms, and Barker Slough.

"Arguably, this region is most like the historical delta, although many of its channels have been leveed or otherwise altered," the report said.

But the North Bay Aqueduct begins in this area, with pumps that lift water out of Barker Slough. Okita and his agency want to make certain freshwater wetlands restoration projects there don't hinder shipping drinking water to Fairfield, Vacaville, Vallejo and Napa.

More wetlands could put more organic matter into the water, Okita said. That makes it harder to clean the water up at treatment plants.

Plus, more freshwater wetlands could attract the rare delta smelt. But then the North Bay Aqueduct pumps could get shut down at times to avoid sucking up and killing the fish, which are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

SCWA has talked to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about some type of agreement, so increased numbers of smelt wouldn't stop North Bay Aqueduct water pumping, Okita said.

The Solano Land Trust is working on a habitat restoration project near Barker Slough, Okita said. The water agency will monitor the project to see how it affects water quality.

"We're watching restoration projects in that area very carefully and letting agencies like the Fish and Wildlife Service and Solano Land Trust know we have concerns," Okita said.

The message seems to be getting out. The Public Policy Institute report mentions the presence of the North Bay Aqueduct pumps.

### **Suisun Marsh owners want voice heard**

Another area mentioned in the report is Suisun Marsh, which is 116,000 acres of wetlands, waterways and uplands south of Suisun City and Fairfield. Levees could be breached there to let in the tides, creating a more natural area.

But Steven Chappell, executive director of the Suisun Resource Conservation District, wants to make certain the 150 or so duck clubs that own much of Suisun Marsh have a say. The district represents the duck club owners.

He expressed concern about people looking to Suisun Marsh for delta environmental projects without realizing the duck clubs have preserved the marsh.

"You have very active stakeholders," Chappell said. "The landowners of the marsh have been good stewards of the resource. They can't be left out of the discussion about long-term solutions."

The duck clubs run managed wetlands, not the tidal wetlands the planners want created. Managed wetlands are behind levees.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The duck clubs flood and drain the land at certain times of the year using pumps and pipes, in effect farming the land to grow plants favored by ducks.

Van Sickle Island is mentioned in the report as a candidate for restoration. But Chappell is skeptical about breaching the levees there and changing the managed wetlands into tidal wetlands.

The island is owned by about 15 private duck clubs, Chappell said. It is one of the more subsided areas of Suisun Marsh.

"If it were restored to tidal action, it wouldn't be an emergent vegetative marsh," Chappell said. "It would be open water."

There are other areas in the marsh that are better candidates to be restored to tidal wetlands, Chappell said. Three areas already targeted for restoration total about 1,000 acres, he said.

Another area mentioned in the study for habitat restoration is the Yolo Bypass. This swathe of land in the east county is dry for much of the year, but carries vast amounts of excess Sacramento River water during large storms.

"The delta doubles in size when the Yolo Bypass is flooded," the report said. "The problem is the bypass floods only erratically and not always at times optimal for fish and birds."

The report sees room for manipulating the water there to help the environment. But various Solano County officials have long said that any changes to the Yolo Bypass must not impede its ability to convey flood waters which pour out of the bypass into the Sacramento River near Rio Vista.

### **Possible restoration areas in Solano**

-- Cache Slough region in eastern Solano County north of Rio Vista. Includes Liberty Island and the Barker Slough area where North Bay Aqueduct pumps bring water to Fairfield, Vacaville and Vallejo.

-- Van Sickle Island/Southern Suisun Marsh south of Suisun City. Suisun Marsh is the largest contiguous estuarine marsh in the United States.

-- Yolo Bypass in eastern Solano County provides an alternate route for Sacramento River waters during period of intense storms, preventing flooding in the Sacramento area. It is usually dry. ###

### **New parties come to table for delta talks; More residents, other private interests want their concerns voiced**

**Modesto Bee – 3/18/07**

**By Michael G. Mooney, staff writer**

SUISUN CITY — That the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta faces multiple maladies should come as no surprise.

The delta's many woes have been pondered, analyzed and even legislated for more than 30 years.

Key issues include: Water quality; Crumbling levees; Flooding

Now, growth and development are adding to the problem. Pressure is mounting to urbanize big chunks of the delta.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Because much of the delta is at or below sea level, the new subdivisions and shopping centers will have to rely upon an aging system of earthen levees to hold back the water.

Numerous federal and state officials are engaged in the quest, along with agribusiness and large water agencies such as Southern California's Metropolitan Water District.

But most of the estimated 200 people who gathered Friday for an all-day delta conference at Suisun City's Joseph A. Nelson Community Center were not the usual suspects.

"We're seeing (more) private citizens and interests here," said Rita Schmidt Sudman, executive director of the Water Education Foundation, "who haven't been at the table before."

The Suisun City session was the second such conference sponsored by the nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation. At least three more conferences are planned in coming months at other locations around the state.

Much is at stake.

Without a viable delta, the state's economy could find itself in real trouble.

Consider this:

The delta is one of the few estuaries in the world used as a major drinking water supply.

Two-thirds of Californians rely upon the delta for at least a portion of their drinking water.

About a half-million acres of agricultural land are irrigated in the delta-Suisun region, which encompasses parts of six counties.

An additional 2.5 million acres of agricultural land are irrigated with exported delta water.

An estimated 42,500 square miles of land drain into the delta.

While much of Stanislaus and Merced counties don't rely on the delta directly for water, Schmidt Sudman said everyone has a stake in what happens to the fragile estuary.

### **Heart of state's water system**

The area's major rivers — Tuolumne, Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin — all send water into the delta.

"People in Modesto and Turlock and Merced need to be at the table, too," she said, "helping to find solutions for the problems there."

If the problems aren't fixed and the delta's role as the hub of the state's water system is diminished or destroyed, Schmidt Sudman said, water to slake the state's growing thirst will have to come from somewhere.

"They may come to your area looking for water trades or transfers that aren't necessarily advantageous to you," she said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Control of the Tuolumne River, which provides irrigation and drinking water to much of Stanislaus County, rests largely with the Modesto and Turlock irrigation districts.

While Friday's conference produced no specific answers, it did give residents, as well as representatives of various hunting, fishing and boating groups, a chance to voice their concerns.

Their ideas and suggestions will be added to a growing body of testimony that will help shape a "vision" and identity for the delta.

But finding solutions to the delta's complex web of problems and competing interests likely will require compromise and some sacrifice.

"The delta is the heart of the California water system," Schmidt Sudman said. "We're all connected to the delta." ###

### **UC group urges freeze on Delta development**

***Contra Costa Times* – 3/16/07**

**By Mike Taugher, staff writer**

SACRAMENTO - A team of UC Berkeley researchers is calling for a temporary halt on new construction in most of the Delta, saying rapid urbanization is threatening water supplies and restricting the ability of state officials to solve a water supply and environmental crisis.

In a report issued Wednesday by the university's Delta Initiative, the researchers said the Delta is facing extremely high growth pressures, even by California standards.

The five Delta counties, including Contra Costa, are projected to double in population by 2050 -- from 3.7 million to 7.5 million -- adding a new mass of people equal to that of Connecticut. The bulk of that growth is expected in the relatively undeveloped and flood-prone Delta regions of the counties, the report said.

"So much of the Delta is deep floodplain. You basically have the (New Orleans) 9th Ward that we are creating in California," Matt Kondolf, an environmental planning professor, told a joint hearing of four legislative committees.

About one-third of the drinking water used in California is drawn from the Delta, a 740,000-acre expanse that includes portions of Contra Costa, Solano, San Joaquin, Yolo and Sacramento counties.

Kondolf and the other authors of the report, "ReEnvisioning the Delta: Alternative Futures for the Heart of California," recommended a temporary moratorium on new construction for those deep floodplain regions until a new, two-year "Delta Vision" process plays out. The planning effort was ordered last year by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in response to the Delta's unraveling ecosystem and the failure of state water officials to stabilize and improve water supplies from the Delta.

It is expected to develop a plan for how the Delta will look in the future. Among the most contentious issues is whether to continue delivering drinking water to 23 million Californians and irrigation water to millions of acres of San Joaquin Valley farms through the Delta, or whether to build a peripheral canal to deliver water around the Delta.

Such a canal has been highly controversial in the past, particularly in Contra Costa County, where it could pose a serious threat to water quality for 500,000 residents. The canal could increase the amount

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

of farm runoff from the San Joaquin River and decrease the amount of cleaner Sacramento River water near the Contra Costa Water District's intake pipes.

Still, support for a canal or similar aqueduct is gaining support, in large part because of the desperate condition of the Delta ecosystem and the increasing potential for environmental concerns to reduce water supplies throughout the state.

The researchers said new construction in some currently open areas could be problematic.

Development in west Stockton, for example, threatens to cut off preferred routes for the canal, which could make building it more costly or impossible.

And another area of the Delta called Stewart Tract could have accommodated a flood bypass to protect San Joaquin county communities, but state and local agencies approved an 11,000-unit subdivision there called River Islands.

Environmental groups have sued to overturn the developers' permits, but if the project goes forward it could greatly complicate any future plans to build a flood bypass.

"Urbanization is throwing away long-range management options before we can even consider them," said William Eisenstein, another of the report's authors.

The likelihood of a state-ordered moratorium on new construction seems remote, at least for the time being -- though the experts' proposal reinforces the growing sense of crisis in the Delta.

Assemblywoman Lois Wolk, D-Davis, a leading advocate for stricter regulation on development in the floodplain, said a moratorium at this point probably goes too far and said she would prefer stricter levee and construction standards to protect residents.

But, she added, "If we don't act, then a moratorium starts to make more sense."

Kondolf, the environmental planning professor, said even developers who build levees that are twice as protective as the current standard would put the houses behind them at high risk, with a 10 percent chance of flooding during the life of a 30-year mortgage. And in deep areas of the Delta, the flooding could extend as high as the ceiling.

The report amounts to an attempt to raise the profile of land use issues in the Delta, a region where major controversies rage over the flow of water for cities, farms and the environment.

"Everybody is arguing about water and nobody is doing anything about land use, which will ultimately foreclose opportunities," said John Cain, the report's third author and a restoration ecologist at the Natural Heritage Institute.

The report's authors recommend increasing recreational opportunities in the Delta, forming a land trust to buy Delta land for public uses and considering government oversight in the Delta modeled on agencies such as the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, or other agencies at Lake Tahoe and the Florida Everglades. ###

**NEW LIFE FOR BAY SANCTUARY; Once farmland, salt ponds, Bair Island now protected and ready for restoration**

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### ***San Francisco Chronicle – 3/15/07***

**By Jane Kay, staff writer**

The biggest undeveloped island in San Francisco Bay, hidden between Redwood City and San Carlos, is a haven for the harbor seal, the great egret and the salt marsh harvest mouse.

Yet Bair Island might have been home to malls and high-rises instead of marine mammals and herons had it not been for a group of conservationists.

Today, the 3,000-acre island -- twice as big as the Presidio in San Francisco -- is ready for restoration. Old earthen berms diked for farming, grazing and salt production will come down, letting in the tides for the first time since the 1800s. Construction starts this summer, but it could take four years to finish the project and a decade more for the marsh plants to return.

Restoring the tidal marsh will benefit the estuary and open a window to the wild side of the bay to visiting schoolchildren, photographers, bird-watchers, hikers, bicyclists and kayakers. Eventually, a parking lot for school buses will be built. A pedestrian bridge from Redwood City to the nearest part of the island will lead to a 1.8-mile trail, ending in two wildlife viewing platforms. Another viewing platform will be built on the outer island.

Tidal marsh is the foundation of a healthy estuary, scientists say. The soggy ecosystem will help control floodwaters, including those caused by rising seas. The marsh also will catch pollutants and act as a rich nursery for mussels, oysters, worms and crustaceans at the base of the bay's web of aquatic life. Without a functioning tidal marsh, there's not much to eat for young Dungeness crab, salmon and steelhead.

Over the past 200 years, the growing California population built towns, roads and other development on top of filled tidal marsh, cutting the bay's original ring of 190,000 acres to 40,000 acres -- an 80 percent loss.

Local natural resource managers set a goal of restoring 100,000 acres in 2000. So far, about 13,000 acres have been returned. Creating 1,400 acres of tidal marsh at Bair Island and completing work at some 15,000 acres of other former salt ponds would easily double that number.

Last week, Ralph Nobles and Florence and Philip LaRiviere, three saviors of Bair Island, met at their old haunt, Waterfront Restaurant in Pete's Harbor in Redwood City. >From a deck, the white-haired octogenarians admired the island, a prize they savored and won.

In 1982, Nobles and his late wife, Carolyn, fought for a referendum that stopped a Redwood City Council plan to build a new town on the island and transform it into another Redwood Shores, a town with 15,000 office complexes such as the towering Oracle Corp. headquarters.

The referendum passed by only 44 votes.

When Nobles, a nuclear physicist, read about the development plans, he said he cried out, "They can't do that" and began gathering friends.

"Islands are special," Nobles said last week. "They're isolated from urban predators, and that includes people."

Yet even the public vote on the island's future didn't stop subsequent development proposals from such companies as Leslie Salt Co., Mobile Development Corp. and, the final one, the Japanese multinational corporation Kumagai Gumi.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

In the mid-1990s, Florence LaRiviere traveled to Japan to meet with environmentalists there working to convince corporate executives to sell Bair Island for a refuge. Bay Area activists took out a full-page ad in the New York Times to put pressure on Kumagai Taichiro, president of the company. Weeks later, the corporation agreed to sell.

In 1997, the Peninsula Open Space Trust bought the island using \$15 million raised from private donors and government agencies. The group turned over the island to the government, and today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages it as part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Bair Island, said to be named after a long-ago hay farmer, is a throwback to days when fish jumped in the sloughs and scented pickleweed and cordgrass carpeted the shores.

During high tide on a recent warm day, Fish and Wildlife Service Ranger Sean Reier headed out Redwood Creek in a motorboat to survey the island. Two wavy sloughs, or channels, divide the island into three sections.

Thousands of visitors each year walk and bicycle on the 3.3-mile Bay Trail along inner Bair Island, starting at a land bridge that connects at Whipple Avenue. Middle and outer Bair are almost entirely off limits to people, and rule violators face a \$125 fine.

As Reier putted through Corkscrew Slough, the only mammals in view were clusters of harbor seals lounging along the banks, eyeing the advancing boat.

"I've seen 20 harbor seals hauled out at one time," said Reier, who was careful not to get too close to the timid seals. They inhabit only a few isolated spots in the bay, including Mowry Slough and Greco Island. Humans have scared them away from other spots, and scientists suspect that this prevents the bay's population from growing beyond about 700.

Buffleheads, ruddy ducks and scaups safely flew over the bay water. Grebes circled in the water and took off en masse. Two heron stood, watching to see if the Reier's boat posed a danger.

On the outer island, biologists have put up nesting boxes to help out the great blue heron, black-crowned night heron and snowy egret. Red foxes, nonnative predators that can swim to the island, had been eating the eggs before wildlife officials started trapping and removing them. Now, the hope is that the birds' numbers will rise.

Once a month for the past four years, volunteers with Save the Bay visit the island, pulling nonnative ice plant and planting about 1,700 plants, including marsh gumplant, alkali heath and salt grass.

The work is part of the restoration overseen by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Already workers have begun to build up parts of the inner island with dredge spoils from the port of Redwood City. The island had sunk from farming. Without the extra soil, the island would become a lake at high tide instead of a salt marsh.

On a January day, Suresh Raman, a 36-year-old computer software engineer at eBay, was one of the volunteers who canoed out to middle Bair to work.

"I'm just a big eco-nut. I'm interested in all environmental issues. This is my chance to practice to what I preach to other people about being eco-friendly and having a minimum impact on the environment," Raman said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Other bayside gardeners include high school students, retired executives and others just wanting to do something for the bay.

Ginny Anderson, 71, an Atherton author of "Circling San Francisco Bay: A Pilgrimage to Wild and Sacred Places," was another volunteer on the January trip. She worked to spare the island from development in the 1990s. Digging up invasive plants is "a nice opportunity to helping to sustain this wonderful spot that's really a treasure in the middle of the bay," she said.

Back at the Pete's Harbor, Nobles, active and ready to take on other development battles at 87, acknowledged that winning protection for Bair Island "was a very uphill battle because nobody was on our side."

But as he looked over the island and thought about the upcoming restoration, he said, "I just feel so full of pride and happiness that it's hard to describe. Every time, my wife, Carolyn, and I would drive by, we'd say, 'That's our monument.' "

### **Bair Island at a glance**

**History:** Diked in the late 1800s, the island was used for agriculture until 1946, when it was converted to salt ponds. In 1982, a voter-approved measure halted development plans

**Critters:** Animals on the island include the harbor seal, California clapper rail, salt marsh harvest mouse, great blue heron, black-crowned night heron and snowy egret.

**Plants:** Pickleweed is a native salt marsh plant species that supports a variety of habitat, including the salt marsh harvest mouse.

Native species of cordgrass is prime habitat for the clapper rail. Also found in the salt marsh are alkali heath, salt marsh dodder and jaumea. Marsh gumplant is found at higher elevations

**Size:** 3,000 acres

**How to help:** Call Save the Bay at (510) 452-9261 or the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge at (510) 792-0222.

**How to visit:** Contact refuge officials at (510) 792-0222 or go to [www.fws.gov/desfbay](http://www.fws.gov/desfbay). An easy and popular 3-mile hike starts at a trailhead off Whipple Drive. A boat launch is available off Seaport Boulevard. Hunting is allowed under state regulation during the season, which ended in January.

**Source:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Save the Bay, California Department of Fish & Game. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY:**

#### **Not all Delta, S.J. River fish safe to eat; Mercury dangers prompt state to issue guidelines**

***Stockton Record – 3/10/07***

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

STOCKTON - Cliff Rich sees the same faces nearly every day - fishermen on the stony banks of levees reeling in catfish, bluegill or bass.

He wonders if the daily catch will end up on the dinner table.

"Those old-timers say they've been eating fish from the Delta since they were kids, but now there are so many areas with high mercury levels," said Rich, 56, a member of the Stockton chapter of the California Striped Bass Association. "I'm pretty sure people are aware of (the danger), but they ignore it."

State officials this week issued proposed recommendations on eating fish from the south Delta and the San Joaquin River. Too much fish can expose humans to high levels of mercury, which attacks the nervous system and is particularly hazardous for pregnant women and their unborn children.

Experts have warned about fish from some Stockton-area waterways since at least 1994. But this is the first time such warnings have applied to the San Joaquin River south of Stockton, said Allan Hirsch, a spokesman with the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

"We're going more and more toward what we're calling safe eating guidelines," he said. "Instead of warning people not to eat fish, we want to be able to tell people what they can eat."

"Fish are nutritious. They're part of a healthy diet."

Still, the guidelines point to a variety of bass and sturgeon as potentially dangerous. Some of the largest striped bass found in the south Delta should not be eaten at all, nor any fish caught near the Port of Stockton, as a number of signs have warned the public for the past decade.

Mercury contamination is a national problem that has led to fish consumption guidelines in most states. Years of data collection prompted the latest California standards, Hirsch said.

Almost all fish contain mercury, a metal found naturally in rocks. But Gold Rush mining and the burning of fossil fuels have released mercury into the water and air.

In the water, mercury converts to a more toxic form, methylmercury, which accumulates in tiny organisms eaten by fish.

It can then spread up the food chain to humans.

Many of the city's roughly 10,000 Cambodian residents whose diets are rich in fish may not realize the dangers, said community leader Sophat Sorn. They are not used to mercury problems in their native waters and may not have the English skills to understand posted warnings.

"We try by all means to educate our people," Sorn said. "Mercury in the fish is something new, and they have to make adjustments on that."

Many fish purchased in stores or restaurants can be safely eaten, the state says, including shrimp, crab and salmon.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Rich, who occasionally eats the stripers he hauls in from the Delta, said he's less concerned about mercury exposure than the danger of driving to his favorite fishing hole.

But just to be safe, he suggests throwing back a few of those bass or catfish and stopping by your favorite fast-food joint on the way home.

"Most of them have a pretty good fish sandwich," Rich said. ###

### **Tapping a resource; Lodi looking to put recycled water to good use**

***Lodi News Sentinel – 3/14/07***

**By Matt Brown, staff writer**

Water from a flushed toilet in Lodi eventually ends up in the San Joaquin Delta. In ten years, however, that same wastewater could be used to water the baseball fields at DeBenedetti Park.

The City of Lodi is creating a recycled water master plan to recapture a precious resource that is only going to become scarcer as California grows.

"This is water we discharge to the Delta," Public Works Director Richard Prima said during a Tuesday morning City Council study session. "Basically, we throw it away."

Also called reclaimed water, recycled water is treated wastewater that is commonly used for irrigation. Although it is potable, recycled water is not used as drinking water because many people have psychological hang-ups about consuming water that was formerly sewage. It contains higher levels of nitrogen, which can help fertilize plants.

Residents currently pay for the cost of drinking water distribution but not the actual water, as is the case in some drier cities where water is more valuable, City Manager Blair King said.

"Water is undervalued in Lodi," he said. "As water costs go up, the cost of looking at recycled water goes down."

Prima said Lodi will exhaust its water supply by 2018.

"This whole study is really about the future," Prima said. "We are not talking about implementing this for a number of years. In 2018 we are really going to need recycled water."

Lodi currently uses 18,000 acre feet of groundwater per year. An additional 6,000 acre feet of Mokelumne River water that Lodi buys from the Woodbridge Irrigation District could be used if the city decides to build a treatment plant or use it to recharge its groundwater.

The city currently banks the WID water for future use but could use it in a recycling program, Prima said.

"A surface water treatment plant may not handle all the WID water," he said. "The rest can be used as recycled water. It's not clear. We need to flush that out a bit more."

Lodi should take proactive steps to create a recycled water plan to capitalize on available state grant funds, said Deana Donohue, a consultant with RMC. It takes a long time to lay the purple recycled water pipes from the city's wastewater treatment plant at White Slough, Donohue told the council at Tuesday's meeting.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The city has a \$10,000 contract with Sacramento-based RMC to help prepare its recycled water master plan.

City Engineer Wally Sandelin said the city's study phase of the recycled water program has not looked at cost benefits yet. He said studied benefits include reducing the drain on the city's groundwater supply and long-term water conservation.

Recycled water is used all over Australia, Arizona, Florida and Nevada. In California, it is used in cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Roseville, Santa Rosa, Palo Alto and San Jose. Stockton is also planning a recycled water program, possibly in partnership with Lodi.

### **Bureau dumps piping plans**

***Fairfield Daily Republic – 3/13/04***

**By Barry Eberling, staff writer**

FAIRFIELD - A one-time plan to bring tainted water in pipes from Central Valley farmlands about 200 miles to Suisun Bay appears to be off the table once and for all.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on Friday released its decision on how to handle the water, which is pumped from the farms.

As the bureau indicated last year, it wants to retire some irrigated farmland, reuse irrigation water and use various water-treatment systems and evaporation ponds, all within the Central Valley.

So the original idea of pouring the water into Suisun Bay near Chipps Island apparently will remain a relic of the 1960s and 1970s. Congress will have the final word.

"The out-of-valley drainage solutions were politically very difficult," bureau spokesman Jeffrey McCracken said Monday. "I seriously wouldn't expect anyone to alter or do anything to the decision that was made."

A few decades ago, building the San Luis Drain to Suisun Bay was seen as the solution to getting rid of the tainted water. Workers built 81 miles of the drain before stopping in 1975 because of financial and environmental concerns.

The water created the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge near Los Banos. But in the 1983, researchers discovered the offspring of shorebirds using the water in many cases died or emerged from their eggs deformed.

That incident drew national attention and brought the danger of selenium in the water to the forefront.

Still, the option of extending the pipeline to Suisun Bay or the Carquinez Strait appeared in the 2005 draft San Luis Drainage environmental study. The water would have been treated and the overall effect in Suisun Bay would be minimal, the study said.

Environmental studies must contain alternatives to the preferred solution.

The bureau eliminated the Suisun Bay and Carquinez Strait options, said the record of decision released Friday. It listed two reasons:

- The Bay-Delta is the source for about two-thirds of the state's water supply.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

- Delta waters are already considered under the Clean Water Act to have too much selenium.

Critics of the Suisun Bay and Carquinez Strait options have made similar points.

"Such a drain would have substantial negative impacts on our state's drinking water quality and it would likely degrade the health of the Delta estuary and its fisheries," Rep. George Miller and Rep. Ellen Tauscher wrote in 2005.

Irrigation water drainage in parts of the lower Central Valley has been a problem for decades. Clay soils cause the irrigation water to accumulate underground in root zones and waterlogs the crops.

Farmers pump the water out and need some place to drain it. But the San Joaquin Valley soils have naturally occurring selenium, which in high concentrations is toxic to humans and animals. The selenium gets in the water.

The bureau's record of decision calls for retiring 194,000 acres of San Joaquin Valley farmland, so less of the tainted groundwater will be produced. It seeks to deal with the danger that birds will be attracted by the proposed evaporation ponds and experience selenium-related problems.

And the proposed solution removes Suisun Bay from further consideration.

"We will move forward and submit it to Congress," McCracken said. ###

### **Central Valley to keep tainted farm water**

***San Luis Obispo Tribune – 3/13/07***

**By David Sneed, staff writer**

The federal Bureau of Reclamation has formally decided to keep selenium-tainted farm water in the Central Valley and not pipe it into the ocean near Cayucos.

The decision eliminates once and for all a proposal to pipe the excess irrigation water to the coast, said Jeff McCracken, agency spokesman.

County officials and environmental activists have been fighting the ocean disposal option since it was proposed in 2002.

"It certainly is the decision we've been waiting for and hoping for," said county Supervisor Bruce Gibson, whose North Coast district contains what had been proposed as a dumping site.

In a record of decision signed Friday, the federal agency selected an in-valley disposal method that calls for retiring 194,000 acres of irrigated agriculture and constructing evaporation ponds to dispose of the tainted water. The project is expected to cost \$2.5 billion.

"Now, all we need is for Congress to take the next step and authorize the funds," McCracken said.

The Central Valley contains some of the state's most productive farmland, but its soils have high levels of selenium and salts that must be flushed to keep the land in production.

High levels of selenium have caused birds to be deformed in the valley's Kesterson Reservoir. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **When it comes to water rates, public costs less than private**

***Inland Valley Daily Bulletin – 3/12/07***

**By Will Bighma, staff writer**

A survey of water rates in the Inland Valley appears to confirm suspicions in Claremont and Fontana - the only cities where water is controlled by a private, for-profit company - that their water rates are higher than in cities that control their own water supplies.

Claremont and Fontana, where average monthly rates per family are \$39.94 and \$38.16, respectively, have higher rates than the Inland Valley's other cities, each of which have local control over water, either through municipal government or a public water district.

The highest average monthly rate for a city-owned or public water utility is \$37.63, in Upland. Montclair's is the lowest, at \$26.23.

"Just looking at the rate of increase of water rates over the last 10 years, it's way in excess of the cost of living," Claremont Mayor Peter Yao said. "And Golden State (Water Co.) has never been able to explain why they had to increase rates. ... We don't think they have Claremont's interests at heart."

Representatives for the private water companies warn that the appearance of higher rates is deceiving.

Municipalities' costs for providing water are supplanted by property taxes, bonds and other revenue streams that are not reflected in water bills, but are ultimately shouldered by taxpayers.

"They have access to tax revenue that we don't," said Michael McGraw, Fontana Water Co. general manager. "The money that we need to upgrade our water system has to come from customers."

Additionally, water fees from a private company can appear higher because customer fees must cover the cost of administrators whose jobs consist only of water service. With cities, much of the administrative work for the water system is done by staff whose jobs only partly consist of water.

"(Private companies') entire job is water," said Roland Richards, Chino Hills' revenue supervisor, "but for ours, you can take someone who is working in water and another area, and only a portion of his salary and benefits comes in through water."

Rates used for comparison are from Black & Veatch's 2006 California Water Rate Survey, considered an industry standard.

The survey calculation includes the monthly service fee for a <MD+,%30,%55,%70>5/<MD-,%0,%55,%70>8-inch meter - the typical size for a single-family home - and the charge for a single-month use of 11,000 gallons of water.

To gain control over the city's water, Claremont City Council members are now seriously considering an eminent-domain seizure of Golden State Water Co.'s holdings in the city.

Many Claremonters are suspicious of Golden State's recent request to the state Public Utilities Commission - which regulates and must approve changes to public water utilities' rates - to calculate water rates on a statewide basis.

Because Golden State owns water rights in remote California cities where water delivery is more expensive, Claremont officials fear the statewide calculation would result in unfairly high rates for the city's customers.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

If Claremont were to purchase Golden State's water apparatus in the city, future city councils would be the rate-setting body, not the PUC.

"We get out of the whole process of the PUC approving our water rates, and future generations will be the beneficiaries, because they will be in control of their water rates," Councilman Corey Calaycay said.

Although Fontana has not seen a similar push to purchase the city's private water company, city officials and the Fontana Unified School District are contesting two sets of rate increases being considered by the PUC that Fontana Water Co. says are needed to fund mainline replacements and a \$35 million upgrade of a surface water treatment plant. ###

### **Claremont may take over water company; Election results could provide impetus for buy** ***Inland Valley Daily Bulletin – 3/1/07***

**By Will Bigham, staff writer**

CLAREMONT - A shift in power on the City Council following Tuesday's election vastly improves the odds Claremont will make another move to take over the city's water service.

Purchasing the private Golden State Water Co.'s holdings in the city has long been a priority, but friendly negotiations reached an impasse in mid-2005 when Golden State rejected what it considered a lowball offer from the city estimated at between \$40 million and \$45 million.

The city's only recourse after that - eminent domain proceedings - needed the support of four of five council members, but only three favored the option.

But with Councilwoman Jackie McHenry - an opponent of eminent domain - voted out of office last week, the reconfigured council is poised to take another look at the eminent domain option.

"The purchase of the water company, and the need for local control of our water, resonated well with voters because they were thinking that something needs to be done," Councilman-elect Sam Pedroza said. "The way the system is set up now with Golden State is not working."

Claremont residents and city leaders have long maintained Golden State's water rates are too high. That concern led to years-long discussions of purchasing Golden State.

"We didn't move forward with very much in the last couple years; we dealt with micro-managing issues," Councilwoman Ellen Taylor said.

Before moving forward with a purchase of the water company - which would include Golden State's water delivery apparatus in the city, its water rights, and possibly its 47-percent share of the Pomona Valley Protective Association's holdings - the city must first conduct a detailed analysis to determine the value of Golden State's Claremont holdings, City Manager Jeff Parker said. In 2005, Golden State, then named the Southern California Water Co., told the city that the value of its holdings, not including its share of PVPA, was more than \$100 million.

The city balked at the figure, and representatives for Golden State believe the value of its holdings has only increased in the past two years.

The added cost of Golden State's PVPA holdings "could be tens of millions more than the \$100 million," said Joel Dickson, senior vice president of Golden State.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"It would be a very risky proposition for Claremont to take over Golden State, and it would be the customer who would be at risk," Dickson said. "Claremont customers would pay higher rates for at least 30 years."

If the City Council decides to pursue the purchase of Golden State through eminent domain, the cost ultimately would be decided in court, Parker asserted.

The city would then issue bonds to pay for the acquisition, and fund repayment of the bonds through increases in water rates during a 30-year period.

"The cost part of it, absolutely, there's a point where it's no longer feasible," Pedroza said. "But this is water, and water, being a natural resource, it's beyond just what we think the system is worth. There's also a benefit to the city in having local control." ###

### LEVEES:

**Eyes in the sky; State experts will survey 350 miles of levees from the air to figure out where they're weak**  
*Tracy Press – 3/9/07*

**By Niko Kyriakou, staff writer**

Later this month, state experts will survey levees on the San Joaquin River and other California rivers using helicopters mounted with radar, lasers and cameras.

Between March 15 and 30, the California Department of Water Resources will fly over rivers in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys to investigate the integrity of nearly 350 miles of levees.

But aerial inspections are just a small part of an ongoing \$35 million project by the department to evaluate all the state's urban levees, or levees that protect 10,000 people or more.

The goal is to ensure that the state's urban levees are strong enough to provide flood protection for 200 years or more.

Money for the two-year evaluation comes from a \$500 million emergency fund set up by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger following floods in December 2005 and April 2006.

In February 2006, the governor said California's levees — many of which were damaged by the floods — were "in need of immediate repair" lest they cause "extreme peril to the safety of persons and property."

After the state finished emergency repairs, it began to evaluate the levees. Many of the state's levees need to be strengthened, and some are still made of earth piled up by farmers as much as 150 years ago.

Evaluators will collect data for levee repairs, which will also be paid for by the \$500 million fund.

The aerial levee survey is just a small part of the \$35 million evaluation.

Most of the money will be spent to take bore samples from the levees.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"We're collecting soil samples to see the grain sizes and the strength of that material (that makes up the levee)," said Claudio Avila, an engineering geologist for the Department of Water Resources.

About 15 deep holes will be drilled for every mile of levee under inspection.

Avila and others finished drilling holes in levees in Lathrop on Monday and will eventually move on to test levees on the Feather River, Bear River, American River, Sutter Bypass, Sacramento River and Stanislaus River.

Another 1,500 miles of rural levees — or those protecting fewer than 10,000 people — run through California. While these are second in line for repairs, state bonds passed last November should cover those costs, Avila said.

The Department of Water Resources works with local districts to look after the state's dams, control floods and conserve and manage water. ###

### RESTORATION:

#### **River plan makes heat in House; Supporters and skeptics meet for feisty hearing on restoration of the San Joaquin**

***Fresno Bee – 3/2/007***

**By Michael Doyle, staff writer**

A feisty House hearing Thursday morning gave supporters and skeptics alike a chance to weigh in on an ambitious plan to restore the San Joaquin River, but big questions linger for Congress -- such as just how much the plan would cost and who would pay for it.

Under the restoration plan, more water would be released down the dried-up channel below Friant Dam in hopes that long-departed salmon would return.

That worries many farmers, who fear they could go out of business if they lose irrigation water diverted to protect salmon.

They hope at least some of the water released from the dam could be recaptured once it has flowed down the river.

Painstakingly negotiated, the plan would end a lawsuit environmentalists filed 18 years ago to spur restoration efforts.

"Now that much of the hard work has been done in California, it's up to Congress to bring it across the finish line," said Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa.

Bill supporters hope the House can vote on it this spring. The Senate also will have to act; it's possible the bill could be attached to other Western water measures.

Big questions remain, however. In addition to funding issues, lawmakers have yet to determine how they would measure the plan's success.

"It's a noble goal, to bring back the mystic salmon that had been reported to be in the river 70 years ago," said Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia. "Unfortunately, no one ... can say with certainty that this legislation will accomplish this goal."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Introduced by Radanovich in the House and by Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein in the Senate, the San Joaquin River bill would authorize \$250 million in additional federal spending. The money would fund the channel improvements needed before the river accommodates more water.

Friant Dam releases an average of 117,000 acre-feet of water annually, but the water is diverted to farmers.

Usually, that leaves part of the river channel bone dry. The restoration plan calls for releasing additional water for the sake of salmon; in dry years, for instance, a total of 247,000 acre-feet might be released.

The additional water would begin flowing in the fall of 2009, and salmon would be introduced by Dec. 31, 2012.

Farmers have backed the plan, but "not out of altruistic reasons," Friant Water Users Authority attorney Dan Dooley said.

If farmers had not cut a deal, a federal judge would have made the water decisions himself.

"We were playing Russian roulette with a judge, who had a fully loaded six-shooter placed to our head," Dooley told the House water and power subcommittee.

Dooley, Radanovich and their allies want the San Joaquin River bill to pass quickly this year, and they warned against further tinkering.

"Any changes to the legislation ... could easily undo the fragile support," warned Ken Robbins, general counsel for the Merced Irrigation District.

One supporter of the bill, Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, said: "Like anything else, there is always room for improvement."

The 25-page bill leaves unanswered questions including:

How much will it all cost? While the bill authorizes \$250 million, and the state is committing funds, preliminary cost estimates range as high as \$800 million.

Merced County farmer Cannon Michael noted in particular that a 22-mile river stretch northeast of Los Banos near his home has been estimated to require hundreds of millions of dollars in improvements.

Where will the federal money come from? New budget rules imposed by House Democrats require that additional spending be offset by other spending cuts. So far, no such cuts have been identified.

How will success be measured? The restoration plan does not specify how many salmon are supposed to live in the river.

The California Department of Water Resources is establishing a technical advisory committee to help pin this down.

How can farmers get some of their water back? A 76-page package put on the table Thursday offers ideas for returning water once it has flowed through the San Joaquin River. The ideas include building a \$389 million Trans Valley Canal, but it would be very difficult to add any of these to the restoration bill.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

In sometimes testy tones, Nunes pressed Natural Resources Defense Council attorney Hamilton Candee to support concrete measures such as a new Trans Valley Canal aiding farmers. Candee declined to do so.

"Until a few days ago, no one had heard of it," Candee said. ###

### **Restoring wetlands; RECLAIMING 10 PERCENT OF LOST ACREAGE WILL TAKE 50 YEARS, \$1 BILLION**

***San Jose Mercury News – 3/8/07***

**By Lisa M. Krieger, staff writer**

For a century, California has tried to maintain the Delta as a freshwater lake, constructing 1,600 miles of levees and budgeting billions of dollars to maintain them. Now, a distinguished multi-disciplinary panel sponsored by the respected Public Policy Institute of California has ignited debate over a menu of conflicting possibilities for the Delta's future.

Nature will need a huge helping hand to restore the South Bay's system of salt ponds, says a long-awaited report on the future of the ambitious project.

In this unusual back-to-nature experiment, it will take more than \$1 billion and 50 years of close supervision to roll back the clock to the Bay's pre-industrial conditions, concludes the draft environmental impact report on the Salt Ponds Restoration Project.

"We can't just throw it all back 100 years," said project manager Steve Ritchie of the California Coastal Conservancy, a state agency based in Oakland. "We've changed everything."

The project - the largest wetlands restoration ever conducted on the West Coast - would set aside habitat for endangered wildlife, while providing flood protection and places to play for South Bay residents.

Among new recreational sites would be a kayak launch in Hayward and 37 miles of new waterside trails in areas long off-limits to humans, including the edge of Moffett Field. The 2,400-page report offers the first formal public viewing of the project plans since the ponds were sold to the state and federal government for \$100 million in 2003.

The public can respond to the report until April 23, and then a final report will be submitted and reviewed before the project can begin.

One option - doing nothing - is discouraged by the experts, who say that would not help either humans or wildlife. Also, they worry that ignored levees will breach, posing flood risks.

Fifty to 90 percent of the former Cargill ponds should be allowed to revert to wild freshwater marshland over the five-decade span of the project, the report recommends.

The new freshwater marshland would benefit harbor seals, estuarine fishes, salt marsh harvest mice, steelhead trout and "dabbling" ducks, which feed with their tails in the air.

But there will be no rush to freedom for these long-captive salt pond waters.

The restoration will be cautious and data-driven, as experts seek the best balance between artificial and wild environments for the creatures that depend on the bay.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **Salt-dependent species**

The challenge is that several types of birds, such as migratory shorebirds and ruddy ducks, have become reliant on the salt ponds over the past century. And many of these birds' original habitats have disappeared in the meantime.

"We can't just take it away," Ritchie said. "We can't just put it back like it was."

So some high-salinity ponds - an estimated 10 to 50 percent of the total acreage - may never be fully restored, due to the dependency of birds. They will be retained and "managed" to keep their walls and waters strong.

How much is enough? The final number of preserved ponds won't be known until the process is well under way. If salt-dependent bird populations show signs of stress, the conversion process will slow.

"We'll stop and take a long breath," Ritchie said.

"None of the species have read the textbooks that we have. They will respond however nature intends them to," he said. "It is a huge adventure."

Measurements of species, salinities, water levels and the presence of mercury and other toxics will continue for 50 years. New islands will be built, and predators will be controlled.

The first phase of the formal project, opening tidal gates of four ponds, is expected in 2008 and 2009. A few ponds were opened last year in a preliminary step.

### **Huge undertaking**

Although this report identifies sites for potential levees, it does not make any formal proposal for flood protection measures. It will, however, act as the foundation for detailed flood protection plans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the upcoming South Bay Shoreline Study, said Jim Fiedler of the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

"It is a significant milestone. It will help us move towards the goals of restoration, public access and tidal flood protection," said Fiedler, chief operating officer for watersheds with the water district.

The project is rivaled in size only by efforts to restore the Florida Everglades and Mississippi River Delta in Louisiana.

Project manager Ritchie estimated that the cost of construction for the first phase of the project will be \$25 million to \$30 million. The total cost of construction will be \$600 million to \$1 billion. The cost of monitoring ponds over the first decade will be \$3 million a year.

The San Francisco Bay has lost almost all of its tidal marshes to ponds, development and hay fields.

This effort will restore 10 percent of what's been lost, and most of it will be off-limits to human interference.

"The vision is very exciting, and is definitely something we support," said David Lewis, director of Save The Bay environmental organization.

Lewis also welcomed the creation of new places for people.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"These were shoreline communities - and will be, again."

### **IF YOU'RE INTERESTED**

The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project's draft environmental impact statement can be read at some public libraries, government agencies and online at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/EIR/>. Public hearings will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. in Mountain View on March 28 and in Hayward on March 29. The first meeting will be the NASA/Ames Research Center's Eagle Room, Room 943, Mountain View. The other will be at Centennial Hall, Room 1, 22292 Foothill Blvd., Hayward. ###

### **Lawmakers' rivalry as deep as SJ River; Restoration plan worsens already edgy relationship**

**Modesto Bee – 3/12/07**

**By Michael Doyle, staff writer**

WASHINGTON — A San Joaquin River fight is aggravating the already brittle relationship between two of the region's Republican lawmakers.

The conflict between Reps. Devin Nunes of Visalia and George Radanovich of Mariposa has been quietly brewing for years. Behind the scenes, they have clashed over strategy, tactics and the taking of credit for what gets done.

Nunes is a young, aggressive up-and-comer with a brash style.

Radanovich is more settled and has held his office longer.

Observations, interviews and a review of documents over four years reveal a seemingly deteriorating relationship that mirrors and surpasses past valley rivalries.

"It is so common," said former Merced Rep. Tony Coelho, who resigned in 1989 as House majority whip. "A lot of it has to do with ambition; they both want to be more powerful, and they both want to be the kingpin."

The tension has complicated shared interests such as Highway 99 and Central Valley irrigation. The San Joaquin River struggle, though, is bringing matters to a fresh boil even as both men strive for public civility.

"It's not relevant for the job," Radanovich said when asked about his personal relationship with Nunes. "I think we both focus on what's best for the valley."

Nunes essentially agreed, insisting that his relationship with Radanovich is "fine," save for their "serious policy disagreement" over the San Joaquin River.

### **A contrast in attitudes**

Ideologically, Nunes and Radanovich are in tune. Both tend to rural concerns, each earning the annual title of "Friend of the Farm Bureau." Both lean right. The American Conservative Union gave Nunes an 84 percent vote rating and Radanovich a 92 percent rating last year.

Temperamentally, they differ.

At 33, Nunes is one of the House's youngest members. He has maneuvered quickly since his 2002 election, earning a position on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. He took a chance,

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

and won, by allying himself with House Minority Leader John Boehner when Boehner was still out of power.

Nunes is an ambitious fund-raiser for Republicans, dispensing \$313,000 through his leadership Political Action Committee in four years. He goes on the offensive rhetorically, denouncing a recent House hearing on the San Joaquin River as "absolutely ludicrous and ridiculous" and calling environmental groups untrustworthy.

Radanovich is 51 and was first elected in 1994. He's a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. He has a leadership PAC, but it distributed only \$1,000 in the past two years.

"The river restoration aside, we work on a whole lot of other things together," said Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, of the valley delegation.

Most valley lawmakers support Radanovich's \$250 million bill to restore the San Joaquin River. The plan would pour more water over Friant Dam and return salmon to the river, ending a lawsuit pitting environmentalists against farmers.

Nunes opposes the bill, which he contends would drive farmers out of business. Tellingly, the two haven't discussed the river since a March 1 House hearing cast their differences in sharp relief.

"What for?" Nunes asked when asked if he and Radanovich had subsequently talked. "It doesn't look like he has much interest in working out these problems."

Radanovich, in turn, said "it would not be a productive dialogue" to publicly detail his disagreements with Nunes.

There was no camouflaging their conflict during the March 1 hearing. At one point, Radanovich insisted Nunes and other skeptics had missed their chance to raise objections at an earlier meeting.

"Everybody was asked at that time ... did they have any other ideas or input that should go in the agreement," Radanovich said, "and nobody spoke."

"That's not true," Nunes retorted. "That's absolutely false."

"No," Radanovich replied.

"Mr. Costa said there were other concerns," Nunes insisted.

"No," Radanovich said.

The moment was captured on a videotape made by Nunes' staff, an aggressive move, as individual lawmakers rarely videotape congressional hearings.

Such assertiveness can pay off. For instance, Nunes succeeded where Radanovich had failed in passing a bill granting cabin owners permanent use of their vacation retreats in Mineral King Valley.

Assertiveness can be risky, too.

Last year, Nunes challenged the Republican chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee in a dairy dispute involving one of the chairman's constituents.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Nunes won the complicated fight, regulating a large and controversial Southern California dairy. In doing so, however, he potentially ran afoul of the lawmaker who controlled the federal purse strings.

"There was concern that there could be consequences," Nunes acknowledged, adding that he never saw any fallout. "You don't have to take a political science class to know that when you take on the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, you could have problems."

### **Legislation on the QT**

Sometimes the lack of communication is deliberate.

Radanovich, for instance, joined Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein in instigating the San Joaquin River restoration negotiations in August 2005. Although most affected farmers live in Nunes' district on the San Joaquin Valley's east side, Radanovich did not alert him to the private negotiations. Nunes found out through other channels.

"It was thought best to keep it quiet in an attempt to come to an agreement," Radanovich said. "In past negotiations, you'd have every Tom, Dick and Harry at the table."

Nunes, in turn, surprised fellow California lawmakers with an ambitious Central Valley Project bill in September 2005. The measure would have rolled back environmental reforms imposed on the Redding-to-Bakersfield irrigation project a decade earlier.

Nunes did not tell Radanovich about his legislation, although Radanovich then chaired the House water and power subcommittee. Nunes couldn't attract co-sponsors for his bill, and it died without Radanovich ever holding a hearing.

Highway 99 proved a rocky road, too.

The valley's aging highway has long concerned lawmakers. Radanovich said he discreetly talked about the problem with then-chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Republican Rep. Don Young of Alaska.

Radanovich never introduced Highway 99 legislation. He said the plan was to slide assistance into a transportation bill without alerting other lawmakers.

"Don (Young) said he'd rather keep it quiet," Radanovich said.

Nunes' staff said they never saw any progress during 2003. By early 2004, Nunes introduced the first bill to designate Highway 99 a "high priority corridor" and make the road eligible for more federal funding. Four other valley lawmakers eventually signed on, but Radanovich was not among them.

Throughout 2005, Nunes' office rallied Capitol Hill support for the Highway 99 package. The highway provisions were ultimately included in a big transportation bill approved later that year. Most of his colleagues credited Nunes.

Nunes, Costa said, was "the leader" of the highway effort. ###

### **EDITORIALS:**

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **Editorial: Delta's problems need action now**

***San Jose Mercury News – 2/15/07***

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is teetering on the edge of catastrophe. Its aging levees are failing, and the land they protect is sinking. Native fish populations are plunging, with some in danger of extinction.

Most important, the fresh water that 23 million California residents and thousands of Central Valley farms draw from the delta is increasingly tainted by salt as ocean water from the San Francisco Bay moves farther into the sprawling network of waterways. Global warming will only intensify the crisis.

California must end its political paralysis on the delta's problems. A recent flurry of attention to the issue has jump-started the conversation. Now state policy-makers need to push for a real delta action plan.

If the state continues to do nothing, the delta will continue to deteriorate. And an earthquake or other natural disaster could easily cut off much of California's water supply, including half the water for Silicon Valley, costing the state as much as \$40 billion.

Any solution to the delta's problems will be complicated -- politically, environmentally and financially. State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, is pushing the long-dormant idea of building some kind of alternative waterway such as a pipe, aqueduct or canal to divert fresh water from the Sacramento River before it reaches the delta.

The "peripheral canal" concept was soundly defeated by voters 25 years ago, largely because Northern Californians viewed it as a blatant attempt by thirsty Southern California to hijack their water supply.

But Simitian argues that his new \$5 billion proposal -- which would also require voter approval -- would reduce the amount of water currently being taken and also provide vital money for delta restoration and conservation projects. "The world has changed," he said.

The respected Public Policy Institute of California also suggested reconsideration of the canal concept in a major report last week that analyzed the delta's problems.

An alternative offered by the PPIC is to reduce the amount of water the state pumps from the delta. This would require unpopular conservation measures and anger many of the state's farmers, but it would also reduce the damage to the delta's fragile ecosystem.

The state could also adopt a more incremental strategy of shoring up some levees and making a strategic decision to allow some low-lying areas to flood. The \$4.1 billion in levee bonds approved by voters in November could help with that effort. It wouldn't solve the delta's ecological issues, but it would improve the reliability of the fresh water supply and protect many people who live near the levees.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is adding to the momentum for change. He just appointed a task force of political, environmental and scientific leaders to recommend a delta management plan by the end of the year.

Ensuring the adequacy of the state's water supply and the environmental health of the delta are critical.

California needs to craft a delta strategy that achieves a balance between both goals.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

And we need to do it soon. The residents of New Orleans learned the hard way: Nature doesn't care if we're ready or not. ###

### **Guest Opinion: They also need Delta's water**

***Stockton Record – 3/4/07***

**By Paul Piraino, Alameda County Water District, Fremont; Stan Williams, Santa Clara Valley Water District, San Jose; Dale Myers, Zone 7 Water Agency, Livermore**

Too often, the dispute over San Joaquin Delta water gets characterized as Northern California vs. Southern California, as if only Southern Californians rely on Delta water.

In reality, much of the Bay Area relies on the Delta for its drinking-water supplies.

Nearly 3 million people in five Bay Area counties rely on Delta water - for drinking as well as a healthy ecosystem, economic stability and quality of life.

Santa Clara Valley Water District, Alameda County Water District and Zone 7 Water Agency officials are working with other Delta interests to develop a long-term vision to protect Bay Area water supplies and the Delta ecosystem, and to ensure all alternatives are explored.

We agree we need solutions to protect the Delta's water supplies and its ecosystem.

As discussions continue about how to deal with water needs in California, we encourage everyone to remember Delta water supplies aren't just a Southern California issue. ###

### **Letters to the Editor: Which future for the Delta**

***Tracy Press – 3/8/07***

**By R. William Robinson, a director of the Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District and Ralph E. Shaffer, professor emeritus of history at California Polytechnic Institute, Pomona**

We agree with the Public Policy Institute of California's conclusion that maintaining a freshwater Delta appears unpromising. So do alternatives that would reduce water exports from the Delta, putting the water supply for 22 million Californians at risk from a disaster-triggered state water project closure.

Only re-establishment of the Delta as a natural checkerboard of brackish tidal marshes with seasonal floodplains, creating island and channel habitat diversity, is both desirable and technically viable in the real world of politics.

The Public Policy Institute of California entitled its report "Envisioning Futures for the Delta," but failed to advocate a specific solution to the Delta's problems. The institute's vision that remains unspoken is the nightmare scenario of the Delta's probable reversion to a salty inland sea as the result of several natural disaster scenarios that could occur in the next 50 years. That Delta disaster also envisions a simultaneous collapse of California's economy in a manner resembling post-Katrina Louisiana.

Moreover, the institute's report failed to address in a serious, detailed way the remaining 800-pound gorilla: the sticky issue of land use. The gravity of the matter is illustrated by one example.

Developers apparently believe that to urbanize the Delta is to save it. Last June, the State Reclamation Board approved the first stage of British-owned Cambay Group's proposed 11,000-home project in Lathrop. The River Islands project sits on Stewart Tract in the flood plain of the San Joaquin River. Three times in the past century, the island has been under water. Despite objections from

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

environmental groups, the Reclamation Board also approved an encroachment permit, allowing homes to be built on the levee.

Lathrop sees the River Islands project — which also includes major commercial development — as an economic boon, creating jobs, increasing the market for local businesses and producing needed revenue for city government.

Approval of the project foreshadows a calamity for the Delta's future. It threatens the ecology of the tidal estuary. It also limits the state's options because the island will no longer be available as a flood overflow and bypass basin. When great floods come again, and they will, the water that would flow across Stewart Tract will instead inundate areas already developed along the San Joaquin River.

The River Islands project is a recipe for further Delta destruction, sited at a location that experts agree is already unsustainable.

Moreover, construction of 224 luxury homes upon levees overlooking the flood-prone San Joaquin River is outrageous and unconscionable.

Enter the Legislature, until now frozen into a state of inaction by the complexity and highly political nature of the problem. The Legislature seems unable to proceed due to contradictory ecological and urbanization pressures.

Leadership requires courage. Despite the urge to do nothing, the Legislature must swiftly develop a physical and regulatory solution that protects the health and safety of California's economy and residents.

Such protection might require the state to apply Fifth Amendment eminent domain procedures and condemnation powers to mitigate a future disaster that could cripple the state's economy. Or the legislature might apply a state zoning and development plan that would erase the River Islands project.

Projects such as the one in Lathrop are injurious to the public, as residents whose water supply is threatened and as taxpayers. The Legislature needs to force the Reclamation Board and Lathrop city officials to take another look. ###

### **Editorial: Water, peace to flow soon**

#### ***Bakersfield Californian – 3/7/07***

For the first time since the so-called rape of the Owens Valley starting early in the 20th century, the second of two major water agreements may signal a welcome cease-fire in California's notorious water wars.

An 18-year legal battle that pitted growers against environmentalists over restoration of water flows in the San Joaquin River is nearing settlement.

The San Joaquin River agreement follows closely on the heels of major progress in developing policies to stabilize water distribution through or around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for shipment to Central and Southern California. The proposals succeed the ill-fated Peripheral Canal proposal of 25 years ago.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The separate San Joaquin River restoration project will restore water to much of a 153-mile stretch of the northward flowing San Joaquin River, between the Friant Dam and where the Merced River joins the San Joaquin. From there, the river flows to the Delta.

Part of the San Joaquin River, between the dam and the Merced River, is often dry as a result of the Friant Dam, which was built before World War II and provides agriculture with water. The diversion eliminated fish and other habitat.

The sticking point in the controversy is that the demand for more water for environmental use threatened the supply for agriculture. Central to agriculture in almost all water-sharing agreements is the need for a predictable and dependable supply of water at an affordable cost.

The key to the agreement between the National Resources Defense Council and the Friant Water Users Authority is that specified engineering improvements to the riverbed and more sophisticated management of the dam will reduce the loss of water to agriculture that a diversion for fisheries protection by itself would entail.

The per-acre foot surcharge on farmers for environmental restoration also is fixed.

The agreement ends years of lawsuits by multiple groups that kept the water community in turmoil.

The Friant Water Users Authority is a coalition of 22 water districts that supplies water to 1 million acres of farmland and numerous cities and towns on the east side of the southern San Joaquin Valley.

The NRDC and the FWUA have agreed to the plan in federal court. It is incumbent on Congress to fund the federal portion of the program. The departments of the Interior and Commerce are already working on their portions of the pact.

Given water's vital role in all aspects of life, it is unlikely that a permanent peace in California's water wars will prevail. But if these two agreements are a model for the future, water, like hope, may spring eternally. ###

### **Guest Opinion: Protection panel may have dealt blow to the Delta; Review of study about school accountability misses the mark**

***Sacramento Bee – 3/11/07***

**By Helen M. Thomson, Yolo County supervisor for District 2**

The Bee applauds the Delta Protection Commission in its editorial for saying "no" to a project for the first time. But the question ought to be asked: Why is this the first time? The commission was created in 1992, and since that time 319,000 new residents have moved to the Delta, including 13,100 into West Sacramento, and about 4,000 into Rio Vista. In Lathrop, 20,100 new homes and 10 million square feet of commercial space are under construction.

So why has the proposal for a mixed-used industrial/residential project with 162 homes in the hamlet of Clarksburg garnered so much attention? Why is this development being portrayed as the project that will open the floodgates to development in the Delta, instead of the thousands of acres of agricultural land and open space that were converted to development in the past 15 years? Where was the commission's muscle then?

Infill development in existing communities in the Delta was supposed to be off limits to the commission. The law specifically provided for the well-being of these communities in recognition of their important

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

historic, cultural and economic role in the Delta. In 1992, when Sen. Patrick Johnston, D-Stockton, appeared at the board to seek support to create the commission, he assured us future infill development within Clarksburg would be allowed.

The Old Sugar Mill project, proposed on the site of an abandoned sugar beet processing plant, is a re-use of land that once contributed mightily to the economic vitality of that community. It's a mixed-use project, including agricultural processing, commercial, public space, houses and cottages. Of the 95 acres on the site, less than one-third, 28 acres, are proposed for housing.

Yolo County supervisors didn't just jump into this project! We held 100 meetings and public hearings over four years. We've proudly cultivated the reputation as the most development unfriendly county in the region. In Yolo, we've preserved more than 94 percent of our unincorporated land in agriculture and open space, and at great cost. But this project doesn't touch one square inch of farmland; it's entirely within the old plant's footprint. To imply that Yolo County is about to embark on rampant development is not only insulting, it flies in the face of years of experience.

If what we end up with is a beautiful small community, preserved under glass, unable to grow or breathe, then the commission will have dealt a serious blow to protecting agriculture communities and agriculture throughout the Delta.

*Helen M. Thomson, Yolo County supervisor for District 2, is responding to the Feb. 5 editorial "Flexing Delta muscle." ###*

### **Editorial: Flood flip-flops: Where does governor stand?; State is on the hook for massive damages; local governments need to share in risk Sacramento Bee – 3/11/07**

For the last four years, California leaders have lived with the reality that state taxpayers could become liable for billions of dollars in damages the next time a state-owned levee fails in the Central Valley.

Such levees protect more than 200,000 homes and \$47 billion in property, according to state figures. Potentially, a single flood could bankrupt the state.

In recent years, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and state lawmakers have poured millions of dollars into levee repairs and have helped pass two bond issues that will deliver another \$4.9 billion. Those expenditures will help reduce the flood risk, but by themselves, they won't fully shield the state from legal exposures caused by recent court decisions.

A 2003 ruling, known as the "Paterno" decision, is the most worrisome. In that case, the 3rd District Court of Appeal and the state Supreme Court ruled that California was solely liable for a 1986 levee break in the Yuba County town of Linda that flooded scores of local businesses and about 3,000 homes.

The courts found that California hadn't done enough to identify and correct problems in the levee, which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers transferred to the state in 1953. Moreover, the court found that California was guilty of "inverse condemnation" -- in other words, it was responsible for a "taking" of property that was flooded when the levee broke.

Paterno is problematic on several fronts. For decades, state and federal flood engineers have noted that, in historic floodplains, levees will only reduce risk, not provide absolute protection. In Linda,

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

residents got 75 years of protection from Yuba River floods, but that benefit didn't figure much in the courts' decision.

The courts also failed to note that the original levees of the Sacramento River Flood Control Project were largely designed to protect farmland, not cities and suburbs. While state officials clearly must be held responsible for failing to fix deficient levees, local governments must do their part by requiring flood insurance, creating assessment districts to leverage repair funds and discouraging building in deep floodplains.

Paterno cost state taxpayers nearly \$500 million. In response, Schwarzenegger's Department of Water Resources released a 2005 report that called for new tort laws and an amendment to the state constitution to protect the state from damage claims and inverse condemnation liability.

Since then, the administration has largely retreated from its tough stance. Earlier this year, the agency suggested the cities and counties indemnify the state on all levee projects paid for by bond funds, but then backed off when local governments objected. DWR leaders now hope that notifying residents of flood risks will reduce the legal exposure, but so far they haven't provided a legal opinion to back up this claim.

For the second year in a row, Assemblyman Dave Jones of Sacramento has introduced legislation (Assembly Bill 70) that requires local governments to share flood liability with the state when they participate in a flood control project. It is hard to know whether Schwarzenegger still supports this approach. If he has a better alternative, we are waiting to hear it. But caving on this issue could come at a huge cost to taxpayers, and they will remember it when the bill comes due. ###

### **Guest Column: 'A calamity' for the Delta; Development in Lathrop 'recipe for further destruction'** ***Stockton Record – 3/17/07***

**By Ralph E. Shaffer, History professor emeritus, California Polytechnic State University, Pomona, and R. William Robinson, Director, Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District**

For a century, California has tried to maintain the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as a freshwater lake, constructing 1,600 miles of levees and budgeting billions of dollars to maintain them.

Now a multidisciplinary committee sponsored by the Public Policy Institute of California has ignited debate over a menu of conflicting possibilities for the Delta's future.

We agree with its conclusion that maintaining a freshwater Delta appears unpromising.

So do alternatives that would reduce water exports from the Delta, putting the water supply for 22 million Californians at risk from a disaster-triggered State Water Project closure.

Only re-establishment of the Delta as a natural checkerboard of brackish tidal marshes with seasonal flood plains - creating island and channel habitat diversity - is desirable and technically viable in the real world of politics.

The report, titled "Envisioning Futures for the Delta," failed to advocate a specific solution to the Delta's problems.

The vision that remains unspoken is the nightmare scenario of the Delta's probable reversion to a salty inland sea as the result of several natural-disaster scenarios that could occur in the next 50 years.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

That Delta disaster also envisions a simultaneous collapse of California's economy in a manner resembling post-Katrina Louisiana.

Moreover, the report failed to address in a serious, detailed way the final remaining 800-pound gorilla - the issue of land use.

The gravity of the matter is illustrated by one example. Developers apparently believe that to urbanize the Delta is to save it.

In June, the state Reclamation Board approved the first stage of British-owned Cambay group's proposed 11,000-home project in Lathrop. It sits on Stewart Island in the flood plain of the San Joaquin River. Three times in the past century, the island has been under water.

Despite objections from environmental groups, members of the Reclamation Board also approved an encroachment permit, allowing homes to be built on the levee.

Lathrop officials see the Stewart Island project, which also includes major commercial development, as an economic boon creating jobs, increasing the market for local businesses and producing needed revenue for city government.

Approval of the project foreshadows a calamity for the Delta's future.

It threatens the ecology of the tidal estuary. It also limits the state's options because the island no longer will be available as a flood overflow and bypass basin.

When great floods come again - and they will - water that would flow across Stewart Island instead would inundate areas already developed along the San Joaquin River.

The Stewart Island project is a recipe for further Delta destruction, sited at a location experts agree already is unsustainable.

Moreover, construction of 224 luxury homes upon levees overlooking the flood-prone San Joaquin River is outrageous and unconscionable.

Enter the state Legislature, until now frozen into a state of inaction by the complexity and highly political nature of the problem

The Legislature seems unable to proceed due to contradictory ecological and urbanization pressures.

Leadership requires courage. Despite the urge to do nothing, the Legislature must swiftly develop a physical and regulatory solution that protects the health and safety of California's economy and residents.

Such protection might require the state to apply Fifth Amendment eminent domain procedures and condemnation powers to mitigate a future regionwide disaster that could cripple the state's economy.

Or the Legislature might apply a state zoning and development plan that would erase the Stewart Island project.

Projects such as the one in Lathrop are injurious to the public - as residents whose water supply is threatened and as taxpayers.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The Legislature needs to force Reclamation Board and Lathrop officials to take another look. ###

**Guest Column: Marsh provided fertile future; A century ago, the rich soil was boon to Solano  
*Woodland Daily Democrat* – 3/18/07**

**By Sabine Goerke-Shrode, local historian and freelance writer**

Solano County is fortunate that the Suisun Marsh is within its bounds. The marsh is part of the San Francisco Bay-Delta estuary system and is the largest contiguous brackish water marsh on the West Coast.

The 116,000 acres of the marsh provide habitat for large numbers of birds, animals, reptiles and more than 40 fish species. Thousands of waterfowl annually rest here during their migration on the Pacific Flyway.

The marsh's more than 230 miles of levees in the Delta protect drinking water for 22 million people from being intruded upon by salt water.

Today we recognize how fragile both the Delta and Suisun Marsh are. Major studies focus on several models to protect this important ecosystem for future generations.

One hundred years ago, residents viewed this natural treasure differently.

An article on the potential of the Suisun Marsh for agricultural development appeared in the Solano Republican on Feb. 23, 1912. The writer of the article visited several landowners on Joyce Island and Grizzly Island, where a number of ranchers farmed successfully.

"That is a wonderful section of Solano County," he wrote (this likely was a male reporter). " Those people have a great, wide, level and marvelous world of their own down there, with soil as rich as mud.

"Solano County has long been justly famed for its rich and fertile soil, the finest fruit soil in the State of California, the finest alfalfa land in California, and last its millions of acres of almost useless and worthless marsh lands."

At that time, any open terrain was immediately valued for its agricultural use. Thus our writer continued: "But now the marsh lands are coming into their own and soon will be more valuable than any other in the county, even though many old settlers still scoff at the idea. But those who scoff are those who have not seen what the marsh land will do when handled by those have the proper 'know how.' "

Reclaiming marshland for agricultural use was a labor- and cost-intensive process. Tractors had to be brought in to turn over the sod, followed by dredgers that cut canals along the plowed tracts to help with drainage. These canals allowed water to run off into the surrounding sloughs. The soil from the canals in turn was used to erect levees around the reclaimed land.

The ranchers our writer visited were all in the process of reclaiming land. Among them was Mrs. Alexander.

"Mrs. Alexander, the lady rancher of the tule lands, was working numerous men and had a big C. L. Best tractor turning over furrows around a field containing hundreds of acres of this marsh land, while crops were sown and growing nicely in adjoining fields. A dredger was busily manufacturing canals and levees at one trip in fields not too far distant. This lady's experience on these marsh lands is of such a character that she wants more land reclaimed and is going right at the reclamation work."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The Chaplin ranch came next in his visit. Here, more than 40 men were at work.

"They were preparing to irrigate the crops because of the want of rain, and that brings up another immense advantage of these marsh lands. They can be irrigated at any and all times and the cost of the water is nothing, absolutely nix."

The sloughs were always filled with water, "Hence, to irrigate, raise the flood gates - and let 'er go. Ample water at all times served twice each twenty-four hours, absolutely without cost. Pretty nice, isn't it?"

With rainfall below average and a dry early spring, these farmers were glad to be able to flood their fields.

"Mr. Chaplin irrigated some 700 acres Friday or Saturday. Think of it! Watered 700 acres in one day with the help of five or six men "

Not only was the water free, but the soil was also ideally suited to flooding.

"In irrigation countries it requires much time to do such work," continued the writer, "because unless due care is used the crops are ruined, but here the soil is right to take large amounts of water, use what is needed and throw off or filter off the surplus "

He also marveled at the fertility of this soil.

"Seed sown into unplowed soil where salt grass stands eight inches high and thick as hair on a 'sheep,' if run over with a disc, proceeds to grow as fast and fill out as well as where plowed. This was shown us in numerous places."

With his article, the writer speculated that others would recognize the agricultural potential of the marsh, rather than look upon it "as almost worthless, to be used only as pasturage for cattle and hunting preserves for San Francisco sportsmen. Right now men of ample means are coming in and gobbling up these lands "

The years around 1912 were indeed years of land speculation in Solano County. Among the men coming in was Patrick Calhoun, who purchased large tracts east of today's Travis Air Force Base.

His company, Solano Irrigated Farms, tried to sell plots for "Solano City", a new town for 75,000 residents.

The elaborate development scheme collapsed in October 1913.

Agriculture in the Suisun Marsh continues into present days, concentrating on cattle and pasturage.

*Sabine Goerke-Shrode is a local historian and freelance writer. She alternates the history column every other week with Jerry Bowen of the Vacaville Historical Society. For suggestions, or to submit historical photos or information, she can be reached via e-mail at [sm.shrode@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sm.shrode@sbcglobal.net). ###*

**Column: Delta Vision Process Excludes Recreational Anglers, Indian Tribes  
California Chronicle – 3/17/07**

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### By Dan Bacher

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Delta Vision" apparently doesn't include recreational anglers or Indian Tribes, based on the appointments by Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman to a 41-member Delta Stakeholders Group to advise the "Blue Ribbon Task Force" in February.

"This panel will represent Delta interests, provide assistance and make recommendations to a Blue Ribbon Task Force appointed by the Governor last week, on ideas and innovations that will lead to a sustainable Delta," according to a press release from the Governor's office.

Former Assemblyman and past Sacramento Mayor Phil Isenberg – who was also chairman of the controversial MPLA Blue Ribbon Task Force - will serve as chairman of the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

"The Governor's Delta Vision process depends upon a wide array of stakeholders and the wealth of knowledge and depth of experience they bring to the table," said Chrisman.

However, not one single recreational angler or Indian Tribe representative was included in the so-called stakeholders group. The lone fishing group representative, Zeke Grader of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Associations, is overwhelmed by a panel heavy with people like Tom Birmingham of the Westlands Water District, water contractors, agribusiness folks, political hacks and others who are largely responsible for the crisis the Delta is in now.

In creating "Delta Vision," the Governor's office claimed its purpose is "to provide a sustainable management program for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta, a unique natural resource of local, state, and national significance. Delta Vision was established by and Executive Order in September 2006."

The Delta, formed by the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, is the largest estuary on the West Coast and plays a key role in sustaining the coast's salmon, striped bass, sturgeon and other valuable species. State and federal scientists since 2002 have documented an alarming decline in four pelagic (open water) species – Delta smelt, longfin smelt, threadfin shad and juvenile striped bass – and the zooplankton that these fish feed upon.

In addition to being the hub of the state and federal water projects, the 57 islands and waterways of the Delta are traversed by a major portion of Northern California infrastructure, including hundreds of gas lines, six highways, five high voltage lines and three railroads.

"We recognize the competing demands upon Delta interests as we work toward a sustainable management plan," Chrisman said. "But we need to develop a common vision that we'll be able to implement and this group will play an integral role in helping us reach that goal."

Chrisman appointed several folks from the Environmental Water Caucus that have worked closely with anglers on the battles to restore the Delta, including Jonas Minton, Senior Project Manager for the Planning and Conservation League; Barry Nelson, Senior Policy Analyst, Natural Resource Defense Council; and Spreck Rosekrans, Senior Analyst for Environmental Defense, specializing in land, water and wildlife and electric utility issues.

Although these people are knowledgeable about Delta and California water issues, they form a distinct minority on the panel and their input will be overwhelmed by the water contractors and political hacks pushing for more water exports and a peripheral canal.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

After being named to the panel, Zeke Grader quipped, "I just assumed I was appointed to represent commercial fishing and that there would be recreational fishing and tribal representatives as well, not that I'd be the only fishing representative. Mind you I don't mind carrying recreational and tribal concerns or the fact that I'm outnumbered something like 41 to 1 (the ratio has to be 50 to 1 or greater before I start to worry and that's only if the others have any modicum of intelligence) this old Marine can handle himself just fine)."

Grader agreed with me about the need for the panel to have recreational and tribal representatives such as the Winnemem Wintu Tribe on the panel.

"There does need to be recreational and tribal representation on the committee," he emphasized. "First, because they can do a better job than me in representing their concerns. Second, because I have to deal with a lot of different issues and fisheries, there may be times when I can't be present. For that reason we need more than one fishing representative and for balance those should be from recreational fishing and tribe."

So why doesn't the Governor's vision include recreational anglers or California Indian Tribes such as the Winnemem Wintu?

I suspect that it may be because recreational anglers and the Winnemem Wintu Tribe have been in the forefront of the battle to stop the enlargement of Shasta Dam and to increase state and federal government water exports from the Delta. Anglers and the tribe most recently led the successful battle to temporarily halt the implementation of the South Delta Improvement Program, SDIP, a wacky scheme to redesign the hydrology of the Delta to provide for more water exports.

Recreational anglers and the tribe have also been critical of state and federal plans to resurrect the peripheral canal, a badly flawed scheme to route water around the Delta to the state and federal pumps.

"Our position is that there absolutely has to be some tribal representation on the panel, for a variety of reasons, because of the tribes that live in the Bay Area and up and down the Central Valley," said Gary Mulcahy, governmental liaison for the Winnemem Wintu Tribe. "Whatever decisions the stakeholders panel and task force make about how the Delta will be managed will impact salmon and steelhead, which are important to indigenous people, and will affect sacred sites and cultural areas. The simple fact that there is no tribal representation on the stakeholders panel or task force once again shows how the Schwarzenegger administration doesn't think native peoples' opinions are important."

He emphasized, "It's interesting that Westlands Water District just purchased land to acquire water rights on the McCloud River and to remove any impediments to the enlargement of Shasta Dam, such as our sacred sites on the McCloud, so they can increase water exports to southern California. It's very clear that the Governor didn't want any tribal representatives - especially, the Winnemem Wintu - involved in either the stakeholders group or the task force."

"It's remarkable that no recreational anglers were even asked to apply for the panel," said John Beuttler, conservation director of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance. "The Governor apparently doesn't envision anglers being at the table when it comes to making decisions on Delta water. It is also remarkable there is no water conservation and desalinization plans included as options in the Public Policy Institute (PPIC) of California study, 'Envisioning Futures for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta,' released on February 7."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The people most impacted by the Delta decisions have been completely left out of the process. The Governor's Delta Vision Stakeholder Panel - just like his Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force - appears to be a sham.

I suggest that everybody concerned about the inequitable composition of this "stakeholder" panel contact the Governor to demand that the stakeholder panel and task force be made more inclusive.

The first meeting of the Delta Vision Stakeholder Coordination Group was held on Monday, March 5, and Tuesday, March 6, 2007, at the Sterling Hotel Ballroom, 1300 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Contact: Governor's Office, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA 95814, Phone: 916-445-2841. Fax: 916-445-4633. To send an Email please visit:  
<http://www.govmail.ca.gov> . ###

### **Column: Climate might be right to replumb water system**

***Los Angeles Times* – 3/19/07**

**By George Skelton, Times columnist**

Sacramento — Mark Twain famously said whiskey's for drinkin' and water's for fightin'. But this year in Sacramento, water's also for compromisin'.

It's for using as trade bait — for applying leverage in wheeling and dealing.

"People are talking about it as a chit to be played," laments state water director Lester Snow, who'd like to keep the water debate focused on water. But that's not going to happen.

Problem is, water — generation to generation — always has been California's most contentious issue. It also has been one of the most eye-glazing, until there's a killer flood or a devastating drought. So politicians, especially during this nearsighted era of term limits, have been avoiding the subject.

This year, however, there's potential for rare action.

Democratic support for a new off-stream reservoir could be traded for Republican backing of a comprehensive healthcare plan. Or swapped for a state budget, if lawmakers get stuck in a long summer stalemate. Or, more appropriately, bargained for an environmentally friendly fix to the fragile Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Or all of the above.

"Everything's on the table," Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez (D-Los Angeles) said in an interview. "Healthcare really is important to me. And water really is important to people on the other side.

"I'd like to figure out how we can make everybody happy."

Dams — even if they are built off-stream on Godforsaken flat land — are opposed by most environmental interests with religious zealotry. They fear an excessive use of water by farmers and developers, citing the needs of fish, waterfowl and all natural habitat.

Never mind that the increased water storage potentially could be used for better managing salmon runs that are declining, and for restoring wetlands. It would beef up flood control, provide more recreation and — the main purpose — capture additional water for a constantly rising population.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Environmentalists preach underground storage. Nobody argues with that, but only the enviros seem to approach the issue as an either/or proposition between under- and aboveground storage. They also sermonize about conservation — wastewater reclamation and low-flush toilets. Nobody quarrels with that either, but it's not the total solution.

"That won't help you in the sixth year of a drought," Snow says.

"I hear people comparing surface storage and conservation. That's like comparing a screwdriver to a sledgehammer. They're completely different tools.... We need to have a legislative debate about storage — how much groundwater and how much surface."

The water debate is changing in Sacramento, largely because the climate is, and so will the hydrology. Global warming will convert Sierra snow to rain and result in more rapid runoff, requiring added storage space to quickly catch the water before it tumbles into the sea. At the other extreme, there'll be longer, more severe droughts and the need for water reserves.

In addition, Hurricane Katrina got politicians pondering a catastrophic earthquake in the delta, where 24 million Californians draw drinking water. The delta also irrigates 3 million acres. And it's where the Public Policy Institute of California, in a recent study, concluded that "over the next 50 years, there is a two-thirds chance of a catastrophic levee failure."

Californians voted for \$4.9 billion in flood control bonds in November, but the delta still needs to be replumbed. The water flow south is unstable and the fishery is failing.

A big reservoir — north or south of the delta — is something Republicans really want and conceivably could get in this legislative session because of the dire warnings and compromise opportunities.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is siding with the GOP lawmakers, even if it is seen in the Capitol as a fence-mending sop after he ignored Republicans on so many issues last year. The governor is sponsoring legislation, carried by Sen. Dave Cogdill (R-Modesto), to place a \$5.95-billion water bond issue on the 2008 ballot. It would include \$4.5 billion for water storage.

"The Cogdill bill doesn't go," asserts Assemblywoman Lois Wolk (D-Davis), who heads the house water committee. She says current state studies of two possible off-stream reservoirs — one in Colusa County, another near Fresno — should be completed first. They're expected late next year.

Cogdill comments: "We do so much study and so much planning, 'round and around and around. And we're just waiting for that earthquake or sustained drought. Then we'll be falling all over each other to do something. Like in the energy crisis."

Wolk does say, regarding a delta fix: "If it doesn't happen by the end of the year, it won't happen. Then it'll take a terrible calamity."

She and her Senate counterpart, water committee Chairman Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), both are intrigued by a possible compromise: Building an off-stream reservoir on the San Joaquin Valley's west side in exchange for operating a more environmentally friendly delta that would pump less, but more reliably, into the California Aqueduct.

"If you could satisfy the Republican demand for storage," Steinberg says, "and satisfy the water users' insistence on reliability from the delta, while restoring the ecosystem — that's the kind of political

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

combo worth considering very carefully.

"I'm new to the water wars, but I know the potential for good salable and substantive solutions."

Sen. Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), chairman of the environment committee, even has dredged up the old peripheral canal concept — pumping water directly out of the Sacramento River and skirting the delta entirely. Voters rejected that 25 years ago, but Simitian says his proposal would contain ironclad safeguards for the delta and environment. "They'd be belt-and-suspenders-and-belt-again guarantees," he says.

And regarding the many legislative chits on the table, he says: "There's plenty of opportunity to find common ground on all these issues." ###

### For the week of March 26 to 30, 2007

#### WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY:

##### Canals running high early this year

*Los Banos Enterprise – 3/23/07*

**By Kim Yancey**

A warm, dry winter has pushed irrigation water demands in the San Joaquin Valley to near record levels.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's systemwide Central Valley Project water supply allocation report issued Feb. 23, January was the third driest month in California since 1895 when records on precipitation began being kept.

Weather conditions in February produced better than normal precipitation, but not enough to bring allocations to all users of project water to 100 percent.

The Bureau's March 16 report raised exchange contractor and wildlife refuge allocations from 75 to 100 percent in February, but did not change the percentage for municipal and industrial supply.

Federal agricultural contractors south of the Delta received a slight reprieve from the 35 percent allocation estimate in February, but will still only receive 50 percent of their contract this year if the Bureau's March projection holds true.

Allocations to contractors in the Friant Division remained unchanged in March at 50 percent of Class 1 water and no Class 2.

"There's not a whole lot of snow, especially above the Friant system," said Central California Irrigation District General Manager Chris White at the district's board meeting last week. "This time last year we had 10,000 second feet (cubic feet of water per second) coming down, going to the ocean."

Unlike last year when farmers fought mud and rain as they tried to get ground ready for planting, January and February 2007 have been relatively warm and dry leaving fields with little deep moisture, and winter crops and orchards in need of irrigation.

A memorandum issued March 7 by Tom Boardman, water resources engineer for the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority indicated water demands on the Central Valley Project south of the Delta in February nearly broke a record set in 1987.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

During the record year, water demands in February were about 271,000 acre-feet compared to 260,000 acre-feet for the same month this year.

An acre-foot of water is about 326,000 gallons.

Water deliveries in January and February from the Central California Irrigation District exceeded projections by more than 300 percent with 58,718 acre-feet being sold.

Demands in March for that district continue to be strong but deliveries to growers in the northern portion of CCID are now greater than those to the south as farmers irrigate winter row crops and orchards.

San Luis Canal Company General Manager Chase Hurley said deliveries to growers in that district in January were the greatest on record.

Hurley said average water usage in January is about 800 acre-feet, but this year some 5,000 acre-feet was delivered to growers.

"Farmers needed water to bring up winter crops that were planted dry - usually rain brings up those crops," he said.

February deliveries were about 175 percent of normal, but demand has slowed as pre-irrigation of fields is being completed, he said.###

### **County loses rights to water storage project**

***Lodi News Sentinel – 3/22/07***

**By Ross Farrow, staff writer**

A state water agency has canceled a major San Joaquin County water project that experts say would help reduce the region's groundwater overdraft.

The staff of the State Water Resources Control Board, earlier this month, canceled the county's application to divert water from the Mokelumne River south to Duck Creek and build a dam there.

The state board cited the county's failure to produce an environmental document in a timely manner and to document the availability of Mokelumne River water unappropriated by the state.

The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors has the option to appeal the state's decision to the full Water Resources Control Board.

"It's too critical for San Joaquin County to let that water go," said Kevin Kauffman, general manager of the Stockton East Water District.

The board, acting as the Mokelumne Water and Power Authority, applied for a state permit in 1990 to divert up to 120,000 acre-feet from the Mokelumne River at either Camanche or Pardee reservoir, south to Duck Creek.

The idea was to use most of the water for storage at Duck Creek, a tributary of the Calaveras River, south of Highway 12 near the Calaveras County line, Kauffman said.

A majority of the water, collected only during years of heavy rain and snowfall, would be used to replenish the parched groundwater basin, although some of it could be used for municipal and industrial

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

purposes, Kauffman said.

"We're maxed out on the Calaveras and Stanislaus rivers," said Mel Lytle, the county's water resources coordinator. "We will get some water from the Delta, but we need additional projects."

With last winter's heavy rainfall and snowpack, a reservoir at Duck Creek could have been filled twice, Lytle said.

The State Water Resources Control Board's cancellation of the county's application mirrors the state board's decision to rescind most of the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District's right to 20,000 acre-feet during wet years.

The North San Joaquin District hasn't had the equipment to pump more than 3,000 acre-feet of Mokelumne River water per year. The district will continue to have the right to pump the 3,000 acre-feet, plus another 1,000 acre-feet.

Northeastern San Joaquin County has a groundwater overdraft ranging from 130,000 to 200,000 acre-feet of water per year, according to Ed Steffani, manager of the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District.

Kauffman and Lodi Public Works Director Richard Prima said the State Water Resources Control Board's action conflicts with that of another state agency, the California Department of Water Resources.

DWR told water purveyors from throughout the state to work on a regional basis to solve local water problems rather than for a single city or water district to submit its own water proposal, local water experts said.

However, another state agency — the Water Resources Control Board staff — penalized San Joaquin County because the county failed to submit environmental documents on the Duck Creek project, Prima and Kauffman said. It takes a lot more time to work collaboratively with several agencies than for one agency to prepare a water project, Prima said.

The regional effort is being manifested in the form of the Mokelumne River Water Forum, where water agencies from San Joaquin, Calaveras and Amador counties, along with the East Bay Municipal Utility District, are working together to develop a water project that would benefit the three counties and the East Bay district.

EBMUD is involved because it has water rights to pipe Mokelumne River water to parts of Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

Ironically, the state awarded San Joaquin County \$500,000 in Proposition 50 money to draw up the Duck Creek plans and complete environmental work, Lytle said. Additionally, President Bush signed a bill authorizing \$3.3 million toward engineering studies for the Duck Creek project.

Prima and Kauffman admit that they hadn't done much to further the Duck Creek Reservoir project during the 1990s, although they have worked harder in the current decade.

However, Lytle said the county's inactivity in the 1990s was due to some extenuating circumstances, such as state hearings on the Delta and on Mokelumne River fish flows, which stopped work on county water development projects.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"Since Camanche (Dam) was built in the 1960s, nothing big has happened on water issues," said Gerald Schwartz, Central Valley liaison for EBMUD. "Maybe a pipeline here, a pipeline there, but nothing big."

Schwartz added that the state's cancellation of the Duck Creek application may be somewhat of a benefit because it will get water interests to be more creative and either resubmit the Duck Creek application or think of something else. ###

### **State says S.J. can't have Mokelumne water**

***Stockton Record – 3/22/07***

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

Plans to secure water for San Joaquin County's growing population took a blow after the state canceled a 17-year-old request to draw water from the Mokelumne River, officials said Wednesday.

More than \$1 million already has been spent on plans for an off-stream reservoir that could be filled during wet winters with flows from the Mokelumne. It is water that otherwise ends up in the ocean, said former county Supervisor Jack Sieglock, who championed the cause during his years on the board.

County supervisors in December allocated another \$1.2 million in studies, and federal officials chipped in \$3.3 million last year. Countless more dollars were spent on securing Mokelumne water long before officials envisioned the proposed Duck Creek Reservoir on rangeland northeast of Linden.

Now, the state says the county cannot have the water since it did not submit environmental documentation in a timely manner.

"It's disappointing, and it's ridiculous," said Sieglock, who traveled to Washington, D.C., to lobby for funding for the project.

"We have invested money every year, and we've moved forward with the project. We've done exactly what the state has told us to do."

Not so, according to the cancellation notice from the State Water Resources Control Board.

The saga started in 1990, when the county first filed its request for water. Six years later, the application was put on public notice and protested by a variety of other water users.

Other delays pushed the issue to 2001, when the state asked when environmental documents would be finished. A draft time line was supplied the next year, but none of the target dates have been met, according to the notice sent to the county last week by Victoria A. Whitney, chief of water rights for the state board.

In 2003, the board said it was not sure the water would be available anyway. Most of the river is diverted by the East Bay Municipal Utility District to its 1.3 million customers in Oakland, Berkeley and surrounding cities.

And finally, in 2005, the board warned the county that its application would be canceled if environmental documents did not show up soon.

Some of the documents that the board wanted were in fact submitted, said Mel Lytle, the county's water resources coordinator.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Others were delayed because the county was seeking regional agreements on using the Mokelumne's water, perhaps creating a "water bank" in cooperation with the upstream counties and the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

"There aren't a lot of sources of water," Lytle said. "The amount of water we think we could have supplied us to the Mokelumne could go a long way toward helping us solve that problem."

Each year, more water is drawn from the ground than is naturally replenished by rain. So the underground water supply has been shrinking.

Calaveras River flows are already put to use, and supplies from the Stanislaus River have been inconsistent. Stockton plans to tap the Delta for some of its drinking water in the future, but that is not the entire solution, Lytle said.

The county can appeal the board's cancellation, which could ultimately lead to a hearing to decide the matter. The board faces a backlog of work with hundreds of water rights applications and petitions pending.

"All this does is cloud the water issue," Sieglock said. "If it was murky before, it's muddy now." ###

### **Distributors eye farming changes**

***Associated Press – 3/21/07***

**By Jacob Adelman, staff writer**

LOS ANGELES - Trying to prevent more E. coli outbreaks and regain consumer confidence, some produce distributors are pressuring farmers to abandon practices that have long been considered environmentally friendly.

Fresh Express, the nation's No. 1 maker of packaged salads, is refusing to buy lettuce and spinach from farmers who don't stop using compost and recycled water.

"If there's a risk there, we don't want to take it," said Jim Lugg, food safety director of Fresh Express, a division of Chiquita Brands LLC.

Other shippers and handlers want farmers to stop planting native grasses that limit erosion but can attract animals and trap disease-causing bacteria.

Farmers complain that they are being subjected to requirements based more on conjecture than sound science, and that the mandates could undo years of work aimed at making farming less disruptive to the environment.

"There's been some real knee-jerk decisions made in the industry," said Dirk Giannini, who operates a lettuce farm in the agriculture-rich Salinas Valley. "We may overreact, and that might shortfall the environment."

The California agriculture industry, which produces about three-quarters of the nation's lettuce and spinach, is working to regain the trust of consumers after two E. coli outbreaks last year were traced back to the state.

One incident in September left three people dead and sickened more than 200 others. The contamination was tracked to a spinach field in San Benito County.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Food and Drug Administration officials said lettuce grown in the Central Valley was the likely source of an E. coli outbreak in December that sickened about 80 customers at Taco John's restaurants in Minnesota and Iowa. The source of lettuce blamed for 70 cases linked to Taco Bell restaurants on the East Coast remained unknown.

Not all distributors are adopting the stringent policies regarding farm practices.

Will Daniels, food safety chief for Natural Selections LLC, which also distributes packaged produce, said there wasn't enough evidence linking compost use and non-crop growth on farms to the spread of E. coli.

"It's difficult to put blanket statements out there to say, 'There will be no use of grass for erosion control,'" he said.

Industry groups and government officials in California have launched several initiatives aimed at protecting crops against E. coli and other contamination.

Distributors have until April 1 to sign a statewide self-regulating agreement coordinated by the Western Growers Association, which represents the fresh produce industry in California and Arizona.

The most recent draft of the plan would prohibit deals with farmers who use raw manure as fertilizer and allow livestock near crops, among other practices.

Farmer George Fontes said companies have already stopped buying lettuce grown on his Salinas farm using compost that sometimes contains manure.

"There's no real proven connection between contamination and compost," he said.

Fontes believes that using compost instead of chemical nutrients is better for the long-term health of his fields. Fertilizer can harm nearby waterways because runoff contains nitrogen and other elements that promote algae growth and decrease oxygen, killing fish, he said.

The healthier soil fostered by compost also attracts fewer insects, reducing the need for insecticides that can seep into groundwater, Fontes said.

Lugg said Fresh Express does not buy from farmers who use compost because of concerns that it could contain manure infested with disease-causing bacteria.

The company also refuses to buy from farmers who collect and reuse excess irrigation water because of worries that it could spread bacteria among crops. he said.

Giannini defended his use of reclaimed water, saying it's safe if tested each time it's cycled among crops. In addition, the practice requires less energy than pumping fresh water from wells and keeps farmers from depleting Salinas Valley groundwater, he said.

"It would be hard to say the valley can survive with well water only," he said.

Many farmers along the Central Coast planted native grasses as part of a water quality plan they were required to develop and follow by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Now, they are getting a strong message from distributors that "any kind of vegetation or wildlife around your crops is a food safety risk," said Alison Jones, an environmental scientist with the board.

Diana Stuart is studying the conflicts between food safety and environmental protection as part of her doctoral studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

She has found no conclusive research showing that tilling with compost or planting grass strips along waterways can spread disease-causing bacteria.

"Everyone basically agrees there's a lack of good science, but they think they have to do everything possible to restore consumer trust, so there's this need to move immediately," Stuart said. #####

### **QSA hearing could be breakthrough**

***Imperial Valley Press – 3/19/07***

**By Darren Simon, staff writer**

A water dispute with the potential to shape the Valley's future could see a significant breakthrough Wednesday as a two-year state appellate court stay is lifted.

The question is will the stay be lifted permanently or just long enough to address the issue of the day — an appeal by Imperial County of its dismissal from the dispute.

Imperial Irrigation District officials are hoping the stay is lifted permanently and the series of complex lawsuits — the consolidated Quantification Settlement Agreement cases — will reach a conclusion.

"This does represent a kind of breakthrough for the QSA consolidated cases," IID spokesman Kevin Kelley said.

At the center of the issue is the 75-year QSA, which has been a source of controversy since it was adopted in 2003.

The QSA is a pact between California water agencies that saw the state's Colorado River water supply reduced and forced the agencies to address the issue of urban versus agricultural water use.

IID officials who supported the QSA said it was a way of protecting the Valley's water rights from thirsty urban agencies.

### **LEGAL CHALLENGES**

But as soon as it was adopted and signed by the IID board and other water agencies, the QSA faced a number of legal challenges from local landowners, from environmental groups and from Imperial County.

The county's lawsuit challenged the IID and the QSA, alleging the environmental documents for the pact failed to adequately address air quality issues, in particular as the Salton Sea is impacted by a shrinking water supply. All the lawsuits were coordinated into the consolidated QSA cases, but the county found its case dismissed.

The county appealed its dismissal to the state appellate court in Sacramento and the court stayed the QSA cases until the county matter was addressed.

The cases have been on hold for two years, and Wednesday's hearing could bring about a revival of the cases.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"As soon as the matter between the county and IID is resolved the way would be cleared for the consolidated QSA lawsuits to move forward," Kelley said.

Imperial County supervisors Chairman Larry Grogan said it is time for the county to have its day in court.

"We thought we were dismissed unjustly," he said.

He added in light of issues surrounding the future of the Salton Sea, which is expected to see its size drastically reduced over the 75 years of the QSA, the county's lawsuit on environmental issues should move forward.

"I think given the magnitude for the Salton Sea, I think it is certainly justified," Grogan said.

### **WATER RIGHTS**

Beyond the county's environmental case, another of the consolidated lawsuits has IID concerned. The case, filed by a group of local farmers known as the Imperial Group, challenges the water rights the district holds in trust. The Imperial Group lawsuit was filed in response to IID's move to seek court validation of the QSA.

IID officials have said if the Imperial Group prevails in its case, it could place too much power in the hands of landowners to control the Valley's water supply.

Local farmer Mike Morgan, who heads the Imperial Group, said all his organization wants to do is maximize the use of water and create a fabric of trust among all water users.

"If IID still wants to play landowner against the public, it is a losing deal for the region," Morgan said.

IID President Stella Mendoza said water is a public resource to be shared by all water users and she said if any one group gained control of the water rights, the Valley would suffer.

"To place control of our water in the hands of a select group would be the beginning of the end for the Valley," Mendoza said. ###

### **Water agency sued over estimates; 14 groups claim Sonoma County ignoring signs of impending shortages**

***Santa Rosa Press Democrat – 3/20/07***

**By Bleys W. Rose, staff writer**

A coalition of 14 environmental and community groups is challenging Sonoma County's water availability projections, claiming in a lawsuit that the Water Agency is ignoring warning signs of impending water shortages.

Leaders in the Sonoma County Water Coalition filed suit in Sonoma County Superior Court Monday morning seeking to invalidate the Water Agency's recently released Urban Water Management Plan.

The plan projects that Sonoma County will have enough water for the next 20 years if it can secure state approval for a 35 percent increase in the amount of water that can be drawn from reservoirs.

"The plan fails to develop contingency plans to address looming constraints on future growth and

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

surface water supplies," said coalition leader Stephen Fuller-Rowell. "Instead, the Water Agency plan relies on paper water or unproven supplies."

Tim Anderson, the Water Agency's governmental affairs coordinator, said agency officials had not seen the lawsuit, weren't familiar with the claims and couldn't offer immediate comment.

When the Water Agency released its long-awaited water plan, required every five years by state law, agency officials said they expected water conservation measures, water allocation formulas for customers and efforts to replenish endangered fish to convince state regulators to grant more water.

It is a crucial planning document because it forms the basis for most Sonoma County cities to determine how much water they can expect to receive through 2030 and what kind of development can be accommodated with that water.

Fuller-Rowell said the lawsuit seeks to force the Water Agency to divulge data that environmentalists say shows declining water tables and contamination of the Russian River.

The group alleges that Water Agency estimates are overly optimistic because they don't take into account other factors such as climate changes indicating less rainfall and more drought in the future, as well as contemporary political and legal constraints on water use.

About a dozen leaders in the Water Coalition announced filing of their lawsuit Monday during a news conference staged at the Water Agency's collector wells near the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Dennis Hill of the Westside Association to Save Agriculture said farmers and area residents are worried that water diversions for urban use will adversely affect agriculture's use of Russian River water.

H.R. Downs of the O.W.L. Foundation, a Pennngrove group that monitors water, said too much of the Water Agency's projections are based on groundwater availability assumptions that are threatened by signs of declining water tables in the Santa Rosa plain.

Jane Nielson, a retired geologist with the Sebastopol Water Information Group said her organization joined the lawsuit in an effort to prod the Water Agency to release more data about groundwater levels.

"So much of this county relies on groundwater and so much of their estimates are all future stuff with nothing based on what is known," Nielson said. ###

### **Central Valley Project increases water supply forecast**

***Central Valley Business Times – 3/19/07***

Projected runoff into Shasta Reservoir has increased by nearly one-quarter, thanks to February snowfall and that has allowed operators of the state's largest irrigation project to boost their estimate of summertime water supplies.

The Central Valley Project says it expects to deliver 50 percent supplies to its farm customers south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. That's up from the previous forecast, which was for only 35 percent supplies.

But for farmers and ranchers further south in the Central Valley, the outlook is grim.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"It's been kind of up and down. We started out with a lot of storage and we thought a fairly decent start to the year but then January just basically went south on us," says Jeff McCracken, a spokesman for the Bureau of Reclamation in an interview with the California Farm Bureau news service. "We got a little wetter in February and brought us to where we are today. We've still got April coming up. We've had some pretty wet Aprils and we've had some pretty wet early Mays so with a little help we can kick it up a little higher hopefully."

The California Department of Water Resources' March 1 forecast of 3.8 million acre-feet for Shasta Reservoir inflow increases Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors, and contractors receiving water from the Mendota Pool to a normal 100 percent of allocation.

Higher-than-average precipitation last year has allowed CVP reservoir storage to remain at near-normal as of March 1. With the drier than normal runoff conditions projected for the remainder of water year 2007, the Bureau of Reclamation forecasts that CVP reservoir storage will be utilized this summer to support CVP operations.

But the bureau cautions that so far March precipitation has been sparse and "therefore CVP water service allocations are potentially subject to modification based on actual March hydrologic conditions."

The water supply available for the CVP Eastside Division contractors (Stanislaus River) for the "Dry and Median Forecasts" is projected to be 45,000 acre-feet (29 percent) and 155,000 acre-feet (100 percent), respectively, the bureau says.

Further south, farmers can begin tasting dust.

The Friant Division deliveries are projected to be 400,000 acre-feet or 32 percent of 1.25 million acre-feet, which is the recent five-year average allocation. The allocation for the Friant Division Contractors will be 50 percent Class 1 water and 0 percent Class 2 water.

The projected Friant Division delivery of 400,000 acre-feet may not happen if precipitation remains low. As of March 15, precipitation in the San Joaquin River Basin was 17.61 inches for the current water year, compared to 38.66 inches this time last year.

"The one area that is probably having it really tough is the Friant unit. They're down in the mid-30s right now, based on the inflows out of the San Joaquin into Millerton. So we're really hoping for some storms that will hit the southern Sierra," Mr. McCracken says.

The Bureau of Reclamation says it will update the CVP-wide allocation in mid-April. ###

## FLOOD CONTROL AND LEVEES:

### **Landowners want fair prices in levee procurement**

***Marysville Appeal-Democrat – 3/23/07***

**By Daniel Witter/Appel-Democrat**

Greg Foster owns land near Star Bend to Country Club Road in south Yuba County. He believes in flood protection, but doesn't like how he's being treated.

"I'm not interested in selling my land," he said Thursday. "This is against my will."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

He will lose his livelihood, he said. A new setback levee would sit 50 yards from his home, taking most of his land, he said.

He worries about people using the levee to dump garbage on his property or use the levee as a pathway.

Foster said his land is worth more than what he is being offered. Developers are purchasing nearby properties for larger sums, but the offer from the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority doesn't reflect that, he said.

"It seems rather ludicrous to offer us an ag land price for that property," Foster said. During a five-hour meeting in Marysville on Thursday, members of a state Reclamation Board subcommittee said they want people who may lose property and livelihood for the new setback levee to be fairly compensated.

Board members also want to be kept informed about how Three Rivers will fund the last phase of levee projects.

"It seems to me that we have a credible but tight cash flow," said Reclamation Board member Butch Hodgkins. "The main thing we have to do is monitor this carefully and watch to see if funding happens." Board officials want another meeting in about two months. No date was set.

Three Rivers is in the fourth and final phase of levee repairs, which could cost \$200 million and should be completed by November 2008.

Altogether, levee repairs in Yuba County are projected to cost \$354 million. Most of that comes from the state and developers fronting the money so development can continue.

Three Rivers officials briefed committee members on cash flow projections and funding for the project. Part of that could come from Propositions 84 and 1E.

Phase 4 repairs call for about 12 miles of levee fixes along the Feather River, including a new six-mile setback levee and another six miles of repairs to existing levees.

About 30 property owners holding 48 parcels would be affected in Phase 4. Three Rivers is proceeding with negotiations to acquire some of the property from owners near Ella Avenue in Olivehurst.

Land values weren't the only issue discussed. Committee topics ranged from compliance with permits issued for work to who has maintenance responsibilities for the levees.

Linda resident Rex Archer claimed the levee near Wal-Mart is slumping and that soil is being leached out of the bottom because of gaps between rocks used to fill the 1986 flood breach.

"That levee is not safe," he said.

He claims the slumping was covered up with asphalt so it appears to look level. Archer took issue with a number of other items, including the placement of a sand berm along the levee to the slope of the levee. He also believes that work was never completed on the levee.

Three Rivers officials disputed Archer's claims, saying the project has U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversight and approval, as well as input from experienced and qualified engineers who understand how

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

levees work.

"We stand behind what we say and what we presented in the project," said Paul Brunner, Three Rivers executive director.###

### **Flood-control spending set at \$110 million; Army Corps announces priorities for Sacramento-area river projects**

***Sacramento Bee – 3/22/07***

**By David Whitney, staff writer**

Sacramento will get all the money it needs for ongoing flood-control work this year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Wednesday.

Rep. Doris Matsui, D-Sacramento, said late Tuesday that the corps had completed work on its spending priorities for 2007 and that a record \$110 million will be spent on Sacramento-area projects.

While the corps has consistently maintained that Sacramento is a top priority, money for work this summer was in doubt because of Congress' failure to pass a spending bill for water projects last year.

Congress, now under Democratic control, approved a resolution in February funding the government but without all of the specific earmarks, such as those that have guided corps spending in Sacramento.

Instead, the congressional resolution left it up to the corps to set priorities about how it would spend more than \$2 billion appropriated to it.

Those priorities were released this week.

"This is going to keep us on track," said Christine Altendorf, deputy district engineer for project management in the corps' Sacramento office.

"We are moving full-force ahead," she said.

Altendorf said the corps' top civilian leader, Defense Assistant Secretary of Civil Works John Paul Woodley, has toured the Sacramento area and was well aware of the need for improved flood protection and that he "went to the plate for these projects."

The spending includes \$12.5 million for south Sacramento County river protection, \$76.6 million for continuing work on the American River and \$21 million for Sacramento River bank protection.

Matsui said that the corps' spending decisions for the rest of the 2007 fiscal year free Congress to focus on the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1. ###

### **New analysis of old levees; Helicopters with lasers will speed the state's profiling process**

***Stockton Record – 3/21/07***

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

Chinese laborers toting shovels and wheelbarrows built many of the levees around Stockton.

Now gadgetry of the 21st century will help us learn how they are holding up.

Next week, helicopters are expected to fly over urban levees from Lathrop to Marysville, using lasers to map the elevation of each berm within a few inches.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The laser beams bounce off the ground and return to the helicopter; the amount of time that takes tells experts the exact height of the levee.

The result is a topographical profile of each levee and maybe a clue to whether it is apt to erode or allow water to seep through.

"We're hoping to do 350 miles within two weeks, versus people going into the field and doing a survey by hand," said levee expert Claudio Avila of the Department of Water Resources. "That's the big advantage."

The work is part of a \$35million project evaluating urban levees - those that provide protection to communities of 10,000 people or more.

Crews already have drilled into many of these levees and removed soil samples to learn more about the composition of the barriers. The laser project is an extension of this work, Avila said.

The state says it will try to strengthen susceptible levees after the evaluations are finished later this year.

San Joaquin County officials have said this work could save them money if they're required by the federal government to improve levees in the county.

During storms and spring runoff, rivers and streams push against levees and create a natural imbalance with the underground water table on the dry side. This causes water to seep through or beneath the levee.

The lasers to be used in the evaluations take 10,000 measurements per second, providing data that can be pored over to form a profile of each levee. ###

### **West Sac meetings cover levee status and needs**

#### ***Sacramento Bee – 3/20/07***

The city will hold a series of monthly workshops to discuss the status of its levees.

The first workshop will be March 27 to discuss results of levee assessment work performed by engineering consultants, according to Stephen Patek, director of Public Works and Community Development.

The workshops also will provide information about projected costs and financing strategies needed to maintain the city's flood protection status in the wake of new federal criteria.

The March 27 workshop will be at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council chambers, 1110 West Capitol Ave.

Subsequent workshops are scheduled for April 17, May 15, and June 5.

For more information, visit the Web site [www.westsacfloodprotection.com](http://www.westsacfloodprotection.com) or call (916) 617-4500. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **S.J. levees in a no-win landscaping situation**

***Stockton Record – 2/15/07***

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

STOCKTON - Levees channeling water through the web-like Delta are nothing like the riverbanks of old, where salmon swam in the shade of native cottonwoods and tangled brush crowded the shores.

Then again, many of today's levees don't look the way federal engineers say they should - plain, unobstructed flood control barriers protecting thousands of acres of farmland and an increasing number of homes.

As a result, those charged with maintaining levees say they are under pressure from government agencies that push dueling doctrines.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says vegetation provides habitat for animals on the banks and in the streams. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fears that trees and brush could make it more difficult to detect problems in a levee's structure, or worse, that a tree could collapse in a storm and its roots could rip out huge chunks of the levee.

"One agency wants one thing, and another agency wants another," said Jim Sandner, chief of operations and readiness for the Corps in Sacramento.

Last week, his agency publicized a list of levees that failed to meet operations and maintenance standards. Vegetation was one of the biggest problems for many of these levees, including several in San Joaquin County.

If the reclamation districts fail to fix those problems, they may be ineligible for financial aid from the Corps for emergency levee repairs.

Ripping out trees that provide shade for threatened salmon or steelhead, on the other hand, could land the districts in hot water with the wildlife agencies.

"It's very frustrating," said Christopher Neudeck, an engineer for Reclamation District 524 on rural Middle Roberts Island, west of Stockton. "We almost feel we are moving toward having to work with federal legislators to clearly define a standard.

"I'm a flood control engineer," Neudeck added. "Pull it off and rock it. I'm happy. We don't put trees in the middle of Interstate 5, and we shouldn't have them on a flood control structure."

Conservationists see value in the brush and trees, which can keep the water temperature cool for fish.

"Frankly, the Corps would like to turn Delta waterways into concrete channels with riprap on both sides," said Bill Jennings of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, a conservation group.

"Levees around the world are heavily treed and vegetated. ... I have yet to see a levee fail due to trees."

Consider the construction of the Delta's levees, said the Corps' Sandner. Many of them date back to the 1800s and were not built by engineers but rather thrown up by farmers to protect their fields.

The levees were built too close to the streams' low-water marks; had they been set back, there would be room for vegetation to safely grow on the river side, Sandner said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

He called for discussions at the national level between the Corps and environmental agencies to reach a balance between habitat protection and public safety.

"It's something that is a significant issue for the Western United States, not just the Valley," he said. ###

### RESTORATION:

#### **Report tallies costs of river plan**

**Some skeptical that the San Joaquin restoration would cut up to 3,000 jobs.**

***Fresno Bee* – 3/23/07**

**By Michael Doyle**

Restoring the San Joaquin River could put 3,000 people out of work, a newly released -- and already controversial -- study concludes.

Ground-water levels would fall. Pumping prices would rise. Hydroelectric power production would drop and local produce quality could suffer, the analysis contends. The consequences, moreover, would extend beyond farming.

"Changes in agricultural production have impacts on many businesses and industries throughout the larger region," noted study author Robert McKusick, a consultant with the Vancouver-based firm Northwest Economic Associates, which specializes in natural resource issues.

San Joaquin Valley agricultural production could fall by \$159 million annually when farmers lose irrigation supplies, McKusick estimated. On the Valley's east side, 51,300 acres could go out of production as water once used for crops flows down the long-parched river channel.

McKusick's 189-page study and a 58-page supplement -- completed in September 2005 but only made public this week -- is apparently the first to estimate the concrete consequences of restoring the San Joaquin River.

The study came to light through the efforts of Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia, who has been critical of the restoration plan's possible effect on farmers.

Nunes' staff began asking about six months ago for any studies that had been conducted on the water losses and economic effects. Following a House subcommittee hearing several weeks ago, Nunes obtained the study and supplement, although he said he was furious about the long delay.

Water districts representing Valley farmers had commissioned the study as part of trial preparations for a lawsuit filed by environmentalists, but it was unclear why the study was not released earlier.

"They know I've been asking for this information," Nunes said angrily. "Why have they been hiding it?"

The study appears as Congress considers a \$250 million river restoration bill. The legislation would help settle the 18-year-old lawsuit. Now that Nunes has the study, he hopes to use it to slow down the legislation so that it can be modified to address his concerns about its impact on farmers.

Environmental groups successfully argued that construction of Friant Dam half a century ago dried up a river that once pulsed with salmon. Facing a judge's potentially harsh order, farmers negotiated a deal that would release restoration water from Friant -- but not as much as the judge might have ordered.

Farm water officials and environmentalists have said they could soften the blow on the farm economy with various strategies, including recapturing the extra water for irrigation after it has passed through the river.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Skeptics think McKusick's conclusions are too grim. A University of California economist, Michael Hanemann, found flaws in the study, saying it greatly overstated the economic effects. Hanemann, an ally of environmentalists, stressed that the costs could be significantly reduced through alternatives such as water conservation.

Others say the McKusick study does not fully account for the benefits of restoring a river where salmon are to be introduced by 2013.

"The San Joaquin River will once again become a living river, flowing as nature intended, from its headwaters in the High Sierra all the way to San Francisco Bay," Nancy Saracino, chief deputy director of the California Department of Water Resources, told a House panel this month.

As they work on the river legislation, lawmakers are well aware of farmer anxiety.

"Hard-working farm families who depend on the San Joaquin River ... have been living with the uncertainty of their water source," Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, noted at a recent House hearing.

Radanovich, Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein and most of the Valley's congressional delegation back the legislation.

Nunes, the most vocal holdout, has maintained that giving up irrigation water would hurt many of his farmer constituents.

"This is what I have been trying to get people to realize," Nunes said of the McKusick study. "This has been my point all along." ###

### EDITORIALS:

#### **Editorial: Finally, no flood fight; House OK Folsom Dam fix; will voters?**

##### ***Sacramento Bee* – 3/22/07**

What a wonderfully quiet moment it was in the U.S. House of Representatives the other day when the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved a \$683 million flood-control project for Folsom Dam.

Off and on over the past decade, this committee has been the scene of some strange, ugly fights, centering on Sacramento's flood control problems and Rep. John Doolittle's desire to build an Auburn dam rather than pursue the downstream solutions on the table.

When Doolittle's Republican Party controlled the House, progress on flood control for the region got bogged down in the Auburn dam debate. Entire packages of national flood control legislation were at times delayed. There was one infamous subcommittee meeting when such members as the Bay Area's Rep. Ellen Tauscher entered the room not knowing what she was about to vote on because the Republican leadership had kept the legislation and its Sacramento-area contents a secret.

The theatrics were a sad departure from the tradition of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's crafting flood control legislation in an open, bipartisan fashion. Deviating from that tradition served neither political party in the long run.

The new challenge -- and it is a whopper -- is a lack of fiscal discipline. The Sacramento project was part of a \$40 billion water and flood control bill. Necessary spending reforms to justify projects were conspicuously missing. So long as pork takes a front seat to important policy reforms, Sacramento's project in the mix remains at risk.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The local Folsom Dam project would create a new spillway to allow the dam to release more water earlier during storms. That's absolutely essential to protect Sacramento. The existing outlets are configured in a way that prevents maximum releases until it is possibly too late. When a mammoth cycle of storms aims for our area, the need is to react as quickly as possible. And for Folsom Dam, a timely response will require a new spillway.

In the House, special thanks go to Sacramento Rep. Doris Matsui and James Oberstar of Minnesota, the committee chairman.

Getting Congress to approve funding for the project, however, is only one part of the puzzle. A vital piece involves Sacramentans being willing to invest in flood control projects. Congress typically provides 65 percent of the money and the state 25 percent, leaving local residents with 10 percent of the tab. That money must come from a proposed property assessment. In an election being conducted by mail, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency has sent ballots to property owners in the floodplain.

The election lasts until April 19. If your ballot envelope is stuck in that mail pile at home, please take the time to vote Yes. This is a historic moment that could dramatically improve the region's ability to withstand its greatest natural threat. ###

### **Letters to the Editor: State isn't flip-flopping on floods**

***Sacramento Bee* – 3/19/07**

**By Lester Snow, Sacramento, Director, Dept. of Water Resources**

Re "Flood flip-flops: Where does governor stand? / State is on the hook for massive damages; local governments need to share in risk," editorial, March 11: The Bee rightly gives credit to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and lawmakers for focusing attention and funding on flood improvements. While it correctly points out that more needs to be done to reduce state taxpayer risk for flood damage, there has been no flip and nothing has flopped.

In addition to guiding the investment of \$5 billion in voter-approved bonds, a new Department of Water Resources initiative, Floodsafe California, will support regional flood planning and projects that have public safety, environmental and sustainability benefits.

Integrating land-use planning with flood management is essential. DWR is providing Central Valley communities with up-to-date information about flood protection. This will allow them to make better land-use decisions, improve emergency response and encourage property owners to buy flood insurance.

The Legislature is trying to find the best approach to integrate flood-risk considerations into local land-use determinations. This will ensure that communities take steps to protect lives, safeguard property and reduce state liability for floods. The governor has done more for flood protection than any other chief executive in California history. Now, he is forging ahead with an even stronger commitment to reduce flood risk for all Californians. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### ***North County Times – 3/20/07***

**By Michael D. Patterson, a freelance columnist for the North County Times, is president of Barratt American, a builder based in Carlsbad, and past president of the California Building Industry Association**

Flower grower Eric Anderson has it all wrong when he says people are unhappy with him because he voted to impose a billion dollars of new regulations on San Diegans.

On the contrary, Anderson should be admired for the way he protected his flower-growing business.

Anderson, a member of the largely unknown and totally unelected San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, recently voted to force new home buyers to pay for what essentially is a small water treatment system at each new home -- a retention basin -- to treat the pollution from stormwater runoff, with each costing about \$20,000 by my estimate.

Anderson also voted to require San Diego business owners to submit to an army of inspectors that are required to make about 8,000 visits a year to enforce the new regulations.

That's a heavy burden for all businesses in San Diego, save one: flower growers -- Anderson's business.

Even though agricultural chemicals are a major source of poor water quality, Anderson knew nurseries would have to shut their doors if they had to comply with the same rules he recently imposed on others -- the same way some North County business owners will have to close their doors once they see the bill for complying with these regulations.

That is why he spoke up to make sure his industry was "exempt."

These new rules are among the most draconian ever imposed by non-elected officials in San Diego. In addition to agricultural chemicals, curiously missing from this latest round of rule-making is San Diego's other largest source of poor water quality, sewage.

Every year, billions of gallons of raw sewage from Tijuana flow into San Diego waters. A few miles north, two sewage plants add billions of gallons more partially treated sewage. In North County, a surfer is suing local sewer authorities when he got a debilitating brain disease after surfing in allegedly sewage-infested waters from local sources.

Anderson's new rules do nothing about that.

Maybe Anderson and his pals ignored it because they thought sewage was some kind of agricultural chemical.

These new regulations come on top of existing stormwater regulations that already add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of a new home -- as they have at my home sites, including Toscana in Bonsall to the tune of \$25,000 per home; Country Glen in Escondido for \$16,000 each; and Aurora Hills, also in Escondido, which came in at \$13,000 each; and at Sienna Hills in Encinitas, it was \$19,000 each.

All for a solution many say is not very effective.

City officials in Oceanside said last week they are already spending \$2.5 million a year to comply with old rules, and new rules will add \$1 million to that. And they have no idea what the benefits are. Other

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

cities and school boards around the region have said the same.

But unlike the flower growers, they did not have someone on the board to carry their water. So they did not get an exemption.

Criticize Anderson? Heck, they should have hired him. ###

### **Editorial: Back Miller water bill**

#### ***Contra Costa Times – 3/20/07***

REP. GEORGE MILLER, D-Martinez, should be commended for introducing new water legislation to help the seven Bay Area communities increase their municipal water supplies through innovative water recycling projects.

Water recycling is an effective way to protect our environment and efficiently use natural resources.

There is no good reason to flush wastewater into rivers, bays, estuaries and the ocean if it can be treated and used again for other purposes such as irrigating parks and golf courses.

That is the philosophy behind seven Bay Area water recycling projects ready to begin once they are fully funded. They are in Pittsburg, Antioch, Pacifica, Palo Alto-Mountain View, Redwood City, San Jose and South Santa Clara County.

The recycled water will be treated and piped to water golf courses, parks, school grounds and roadway medians, and will be used by some businesses.

Half of the money for the projects will come from local sources. One-fourth will come from the state, including Prop. 50 funds. But the remainder must come from the federal government; hence the Miller bill.

Pittsburg has taken the lead in the recycling effort by raising local money, putting some infrastructure in place and doing some recycling. Antioch is not far behind.

Miller made a similar effort last year, but this year made significant changes to the legislation and expanded it to include additional regional programs.

Reps. Anna Eshoo, D-Atherton, Ellen Tauscher, D-Alamo, Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, Tom Lantos, D-San Mateo, Mike Honda, D-San Jose, Zoe Lofgren, D-San Jose, and Pete Stark, D-Fremont are all on board.

Miller said he is encouraged that the bill stands a strong chance of being enacted now that Democrats control the Congress.

We certainly hope so because this is a bill that makes plenty of sense. Although recycling is not the only way to meet our water needs, it must be part of the solution. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

**For the week of April 2-6, 2007**

### **DELTA ISSUES:**

**Ruling creates water worries; Pump restrictions in Stockton case may set precedent**  
*Vallejo Times Herald – 4/6/07*

**By Dan Judge, staff writer**

An Alameda Superior Court judge's threat to shut down California State Water Project pumps near Stockton probably would not immediately affect Vallejo-area cities, but officials in Solano and Napa counties are worried about the decision's ripple effects.

Vallejo, Benicia, American Canyon, Napa, Vacaville and other cities depend on the North Bay Aqueduct for much of their water, and officials said Thursday that the judge's ruling could someday impact that supply.

"While we are not a party to the lawsuit, we are certainly going to be affected by it," Vallejo Water Superintendent Erik Nugteren said.

Last month, Judge Frank Roesch ruled that pumps sending drinking water to Central and Southern California must be turned off within 60 days unless the state complies with rules to protect endangered fish now being chewed up by the pumps.

#### **Suit filed in October**

The Department of Water Resources was sued in October by the Water Enforcers, the legal branch of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance. The fishing group said the agency never obtained the proper permits to kill certain fish while pumping water.

Roesch agreed, ruling that the water agency had failed to follow the Endangered Species Act permit process.

The state is expected to appeal the ruling.

Nugteren said the North Bay Aqueduct pump in Barker Slough that serves Solano and Napa counties has the same permitting issues, and if the state is forced to enact new rules in Stockton, it may have to do the same everywhere.

About two-thirds of Vallejo's water supply comes through the aqueduct, he said. The rest is from Lake Berryessa.

The neighboring cities of American Canyon and Benicia have a much greater dependency on the State Water Project. Both rely on the North Bay Aqueduct as their primary water supply.

American Canyon City Attorney Bill Ross said the Alameda court decision appears to have little impact locally because the pump is so far south.

It is unclear, however, whether the pump shutdown could affect other parts of the State Water Project's complex network of canals and bypasses, he said.

"There may be different water supply scenarios that could have an effect, and that's being studied by the engineers," Ross said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

In Benicia, Assistant Public Works Director Chris Tomasik said she expects no impact from the ruling, but the city is keeping tabs on the situation. "We are not worried about it, but we are certainly keeping a very close eye on it because it's a very huge concern to everyone in the water business in California," Tomasik said.

The Solano County Water Agency will hold a briefing on the matter on April 12, Nugteren said.

About 25 million Californians depend on the State Water Project for at least a portion of their water. ###

### **Farmer sees solution to Delta's low water levels**

***Stockton Record – 4/1/07***

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

MANTECA - In 1997, the San Joaquin River swamped Alex Hildebrand's fields and swirled all around his (thankfully) elevated home.

This is not 1997.

Hildebrand fears the river this spring and summer will sink to its lowest level in years, thwarting efforts by south Delta farmers to irrigate their crops.

When the river drops this low, many farmers cannot divert water and are forced to let their fields lie fallow, says the 93-year-old Hildebrand, who still drives his own tractor and has long been on the front lines of San Joaquin water wars.

There is an answer, he says.

Hildebrand favors "recirculation" - pumping water south (uphill) from the Delta and then diverting it east to the San Joaquin and ultimately back into the Delta. It's almost like blood circulating through a body, with the estuary acting as its heart.

The plan would, in theory, improve the river's overall quality as far downstream as Stockton while raising water levels and allowing farmers to water their crops.

Hildebrand, an engineer with the South Delta Water Agency, has asked the federal government to consider such a project this summer. Bureau of Reclamation spokesman Jeff McCracken said that Hildebrand's letter was under review.

It wouldn't be the first time this has been done. In a 2004 experiment, the government diverted up to 300 cubic feet per second from the Delta-Mendota Canal into the river and called it an effective way to increase flows and flush out salt that would otherwise creep into the Delta.

This also reduces demand for streams spilling from the Sierra, including the Stanislaus River from which the Stockton East Water District is supposed to receive water every year.

Stockton East can use that water to replenish the area's shrinking groundwater supply.

"We're certainly indirectly involved," said Kevin Kauffman, general manager of Stockton East.

While Hildebrand would like to see recirculation used on a regular basis during dry years, there are questions to be resolved.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Will the federal contractors who receive water from the Delta get shorted? Hildebrand said very little water would be lost in recirculation.

How much will it cost to pump, and who will pay for it? Already up to 3 million acre-feet of water passes through the federal pumps each year - not to be confused with the nearby state pumps, targeted for possible shutdown in a recent judge's ruling.

And what is the effect on fish?

Hildebrand believes higher flows on the San Joaquin River could flush juvenile salmon downstream. Federal reports, however, say there's potential for more fish to be killed at the pumps.

What's more, much of the water pumped from the Delta originates from the Sacramento River; dumping that water into the San Joaquin could confuse migrating fish like salmon, causing them to stray when they return as adults.

"This is another example of people trying to solve the problems caused by water management operations by engineering a solution that involves more water management," said Tina Swanson, a biologist with the conservation group The Bay Institute.

"You're treating a symptom with the same thing that's causing the problem" - pumping, Swanson said.###

### CLIMATE CHANGE:

**Permanent drought predicted for Southwest; Study says global warming threatens to create a Dust Bowl-like period. Water politics could also get heated**

*Los Angeles Times* – 4/6/07

**By Alan Zarembo and Bettina Boxall, staff writers**

The driest periods of the last century — the Dust Bowl of the 1930s and the droughts of the 1950s — may become the norm in the Southwest United States within decades because of global warming, according to a study released Thursday.

The research suggests that the transformation may already be underway. Much of the region has been in a severe drought since 2000, which the study's analysis of computer climate models shows as the beginning of a long dry period.

The study, published online in the journal *Science*, predicted a permanent drought by 2050 throughout the Southwest — one of the fastest-growing regions in the nation.

The data tell "a story which is pretty darn scary and very strong," said Jonathan Overpeck, a climate researcher at the University of Arizona who was not involved in the study.

Richard Seager, a research scientist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University and the lead author of the study, said the changes would force an adjustment to the social and economic order from Colorado to California.

"There are going to be some tough decisions on how to allocate water," he said. "Is it going to be the cities, or is it going to be agriculture?"

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Seager said the projections, based on 19 computer models, showed a surprising level of agreement. "There is only one model that does not have a drying trend," he said.

Philip Mote, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Washington who was not involved in the study, added, "There is a convergence of the models that is very strong and very worrisome."

The future effect of global warming is the subject of a United Nations report to be released today in Brussels, the second of four installments being unveiled this year.

The first report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was released in February. It declared that global warming had become a "runaway train" and that human activities were "very likely" to blame.

The landmark report helped shift the long and rancorous political debate over climate change from whether man-made warming was real to what could be done about it.

The mechanics and patterns of drought in the Southwest have been the focus of increased scrutiny in recent years.

During the last period of significant, prolonged drought — the Medieval Climate Optimum from about the years 900 to 1300 — the region experienced dry periods that lasted as long as 20 years, scientists say.

Drought research has largely focused on the workings of air currents that arise from variations in sea-surface temperature in the Pacific Ocean known as El Niño and La Niña.

The most significant in terms of drought is La Niña. During La Niña years, precipitation belts shift north, parching the Southwest.

The latest study investigated the possibility of a broader, global climatic mechanism that could cause drought. Specifically, they looked at the Hadley cell, one of the planet's most powerful atmospheric circulation patterns, driving weather in the tropics and subtropics.

Within the cell, air rises at the equator, moves toward the poles and descends over the subtropics.

Increasing levels of greenhouse gases, the researchers said, warms the atmosphere, which expands the poleward reach of the Hadley cell. Dry air, which suppresses precipitation, then descends over a wider expanse of the Mediterranean region, the Middle East and North America.

All of those areas would be similarly affected, though the study examined only the effect on North America in a swath reaching from Kansas to California and south into Mexico.

The researchers tested a "middle of the road" scenario of future carbon dioxide emissions to predict rainfall and evaporation. They assumed that emissions would rise until 2050 and then decline. The carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere would be 720 parts per million in 2100, compared with about 380 parts per million today.

The computer models, on average, found about a 15% decline in surface moisture — which is calculated by subtracting evaporation from precipitation — from 2021 to 2040, as compared with the average from 1950 to 2000.

A 15% drop led to the conditions that caused the Dust Bowl in the Great Plains and the northern Rockies during the 1930s.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Even without the circulation changes, global warming intensifies existing patterns of vapor transport, causing dry areas to get drier and wet areas to get wetter. When it rains, it is likely to rain harder, but scientists said that was unlikely to make up for losses from a shifting climate.

Kelly Redmond, deputy director of the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno, who was not involved in the study, said he thought the region would still have periodic wet years that were part of the natural climate variation.

But, he added, "In the future we may see fewer such very wet years."

Although the computer models show the drying has already started, they are not accurate enough to know whether the drought is the result of global warming or a natural variation.

"It's really hard to tell," said Connie Woodhouse, a paleoclimatologist at the University of Arizona. "It may well be one of the first events we can attribute to global warming."

The U.S. and southern Europe will be better prepared to deal with frequent drought than most African nations.

For the U.S., the biggest problem would be water shortages. The seven Colorado River Basin states — Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona and California — would battle each other for diminished river flows.

Mexico, which has a share of the Colorado River under a 1944 treaty and has complained of U.S. diversions in the past, would join the struggle.

Inevitably, water would be reallocated from agriculture, which uses most of the West's supply, to urban users, drying up farms. California would come under pressure to build desalination plants on the coast, despite environmental concerns.

"This is a situation that is going to cause water wars," said Kevin Trenberth, a scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo.

"If there's not enough water to meet everybody's allocation, how do you divide it up?"

Officials from seven states recently forged an agreement on the current drought, which has left the Colorado River's big reservoirs — Lake Powell and Lake Mead — about half-empty. Without some very wet years, federal water managers say, Lake Mead may never refill.

In the next couple of years, water deliveries may have to be reduced to Arizona and Nevada, whose water rights are second to California. ###

### **Study to affirm climate change warnings**

***Sacramento Bee* – 4/6/07**

**By Jim Downing and Matt Weiser, staff writers**

The message stays the same, but it gets clearer every year: As greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere rise, California likely will suffer more severe droughts, floods, forest fires and wildlife extinctions.

The same is true for many other water-scarce areas of the world, according to a major international study set for release today in Brussels.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"If there's a key theme, it's that there are vulnerable regions and vulnerable people in almost every area of the world," said Chris Field, who directs the Department of Global Ecology at the Carnegie Institution at Stanford University and is a lead author of the study.

The report will reiterate many already-accepted projections about the impact of climate change on the planet's coastlines, rivers, farm fields and wildlands, Field said. But new scientific evidence gives those predictions greater certainty and credibility than ever before.

Among the new conclusions:

- Drought-prone areas, including the already-arid American Southwest, will become drier. Rainfall is expected to decline up to 20 percent by century's end because an area of hot air over the equatorial Pacific is expanding, suppressing storms.
- Isolated "extreme precipitation" events are likely to become more frequent and severe, causing more floods. In California, this additional runoff currently can't be stored for the long term because reservoirs also must be operated to prevent floods. More than 1 billion people worldwide could face water shortages because of shrinking glaciers, snowpacks and ice fields.
- Global agriculture production may increase in the near term, but will probably decline after a global temperature increase of 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit (the report assessed the long-term effects of warming from 1.8 to 10.8 degrees Fahrenheit).
- Between 20 percent and 30 percent of the world's species "are likely to be at high risk of irreversible extinction" if global temperatures rise between 2.4 and 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit. This may have many consequences, including reduced pollination of food crops, leading to further shortages.
- It won't be enough to simply adapt to these changes, the report states. Instead, adaptation strategies such as new flood control systems or crop varieties must be combined with dramatic cuts in greenhouse gases.

Today's report, released by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, represents the global consensus on the likely impacts of climate change. It is the first such report since 2001. More than 500 scientists contributed to a massive review of published research. The report was then edited by delegations from more than 100 nations, including the United States.

The 20-page executive summary scheduled for release today is considered critical because it will become the basis for international climate change discussions for years to come. The full report will be published later.

Early this morning, Field and many of the other authors still were editing the document in Brussels along with the national delegates. Each sentence was being projected on a screen in a United Nations-style auditorium, Field said, and revised until no objections remained.

On topics like wildfires and water supply, today's report represents the first global-scale version of the sort of studies that scientists have been doing for decades in the western United States.

Biologist Anthony Janetos said his research shows that global warming is driving an increase in insect infestations and fire frequency in mountain forests.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"There really is a climate response here," said Janetos, who directs the Joint Global Change Research Institute, a project of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash. "That obviously is a concern for loss of biodiversity and habitat, but also for the impact on people's homes and property."

Peter Gleick, president of the Pacific Institute, an Oakland-based think tank, has studied the impacts of climate change on California's water systems since the early 1980s.

"The basic message has not changed that much," he said. "With a very high degree of confidence, we know that California is going to lose water in the mountains. Every single study that's been done on climate and California's water shows the same effect," he said.

The growing certainty of those conclusions has pushed state water managers to think seriously about a declining water supply.

"We are looking at how to adapt," said Jerry Johns, deputy director for water management and planning at the state Department of Water Resources. The state is now studying everything from how to cope with rising sea levels that could salt the Delta to how to manage reservoirs as winter snowpack shrinks, Johns said. Anxiety about long-term water shortage is also driving support for a new wave of controversial large dams in the state.

While frugal water use and clever engineering may ease at least some of the impacts of climate change for California residents, many other species are likely to find it difficult to adapt.

Terry Root, a biologist and research fellow at Stanford University and an author of today's study, said there is now "very, very good" scientific evidence that many wildlife species are already on the move because of human-induced climate change.

Thousands of species are moving poleward and upward in elevation to escape warmer weather. But none can move fast enough to find suitable habitat before a changed environment overtakes it, she said, and thousands are "functionally extinct" as a result. Potentially hundreds of thousands of species are at risk.

Surprises may include fewer bird species in urban areas, which could mean fewer predators for insect pests, followed by a higher risk of disease.

"We're always going to have a green community when you look out your window," Root said. "But it may just be a monoculture. And is that going to be catastrophic in some places? It will be." ###

### **WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY:**

#### **Schwarzenegger calls for more surface water storage *California Farm Bureau Federation – 4/4/07***

**By Kate Campbell, Assistant Editor**

Faced with an ever increasing population and greater uncertainty about water supplies, state political leaders are proposing a plan to increase surface water storage facilities. Gov. Schwarzenegger was joined at public events last week by state Sen. Dave Cogdill, R-Fresno, author of Senate Bill 59, which includes a bond proposal for more surface storage. It is set to begin committee hearings April 24.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

If approved by voters in the November 2008 election, the bond measure would provide nearly \$4 billion to improve surface water storage infrastructure and serve as a major piece of a larger plan to ensure water availability and quality.

California Farm Bureau Federation leaders are watching this legislation closely as details are being developed. Although no position has yet been taken on the bill, CFBF is encouraged by the renewed interest in surface storage.

Noting that no new water storage projects have been completed in California in more than 30 years, Charlie Crabb, CFBF Governmental Affairs manager, said, "The convergence of issues?climate change, population growth, aging infrastructure?has come together to underscore awareness that water is what drives the state's economy.

"It's important that we add to the mix of underground, conservation and surface storage resources," Crabb said. "California agriculture has always been proactive in the wise use of water resources and the need to ensure continued water supply."

At press conferences last week at Friant Dam east of Fresno and the State Water Project Operations Center in Sacramento, Schwarzenegger said, "We are in desperate need of more above the ground water storage, and we want to make sure that we put the spotlight on this issue. This is absolutely essential for the state of California."

Schwarzenegger said that in the next 20 years the state's population will grow by 30 percent. That's equal to adding three cities the size of Los Angeles to California.

"Earthquakes and major storms are also a major problem that we have here," Schwarzenegger said. "We are very vulnerable. They could damage the Delta and threaten the water supply for 25 million Californians.

"That is?two-thirds of all Californians are threatened with having their water supply cut off if we have a major earthquake or a huge, major storm. Global climate change, as you have just heard earlier, will reduce snowpack. That means more floods in the winter and less drinking water in the summer. Rising sea levels could contaminate the Delta with saltwater. So those are all the kinds of problems and threats that we are facing."

Likely sites for new reservoirs are the west side of the Sacramento Valley and Temperance Flat, which is upstream of Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River. A new reservoir at Temperance Flat would supply 500,000 acre feet of water, enough for 1 million households in a region where population is growing at a blistering rate.

The governor also is calling for \$1 billion for Delta sustainability, \$250 million for restoration projects, including the Klamath, San Joaquin and the Sacramento rivers, the Salton Sea and the Delta. In addition, he wants voters to approve \$200 million for water conservation grants for local communities.

Cogdill told those attending the media events, "I don't think we can overstate the importance of this legislation. This has been a long, long time coming, and those of us who represent this area and live in this valley know how important water is to our economy and to our future."

Given the years of contentious debate over the need and impact of additional surface water storage, David Guy, executive director of the Northern California Water Association, called the governor's efforts to improve the water supply situation a "bold stance."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"Surface water storage is not universally popular, but this governor is looking long into the future. It's really a refreshing outlook.

We need all kinds of additional water storage facilities and improved surface water storage will need to be integrated into below-ground storage and improved conservation," Guy said. ###

### **Water forum experts offer a warning -- and solutions; Fresno State conference focuses on shortages and technology**

***Fresno Bee – 4/3/07***

**By Jeff St. John, staff writer**

The era of taking water for granted is over.

The era of water scarcity -- and all the turmoil expected to come with it -- has begun.

That was the message that water experts from around the globe brought to Fresno State on Monday, as several hundred business and government leaders arrived for the first day of the inaugural International Water Technology Conference.

"The real issue, what I think everybody understands, is that we are running dry," said Andrew Stone, executive director of the American Ground Water Trust, in a keynote address. "And as soon as there is a shortage, there is conflict," which can range from legal squabbles over water rights in the United States to armed conflicts in water-poor parts of Africa and Asia, he said.

The three-day conference -- which runs through Wednesday -- held by Fresno State's International Center for Water

Technology brings water technology companies from the central San Joaquin Valley to Africa and Asia to learn about the latest advances in the field of treating and delivering water for farm fields, industrial sites and homes.

Technology took center stage. Companies offered products such as solar-powered water pumps and weather-sensitive sprinkler systems.

About two-thirds of all water used by humans goes to agriculture, Stone said in his keynote address. So, as people are forced to split finite supplies of water among more and more uses, agriculture "will have to concede water to provide for our growing urban and industrial needs," he said.

And to do that, "Technology is the solution," he said.

For the Valley, which is expected to see its population more than double in the next 20 years, developing those technologies will be critical for supplying new residents with clean water while maintaining the region's environment and agricultural base, said Fresno State President John Welty.

But to bring the best technology to the forefront, it's likely Americans will have to pay more for the water they use, Stone said.

The average American family spends about \$700 a year on soft drinks, he said, but only \$450 in taxes, fees and all other costs for water. He said it's far less than the real costs involved with all the treatment and transportation infrastructure behind it.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Those disparities in what people pay and the true costs of water are vast, said Jim Hanlon, head of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wastewater Management.

A 2002 EPA study found a \$550 billion gap between current spending patterns on water and what will be required to keep the country's water systems operating to meet the projected increase in demand for water by 2020, Hanlon said.

Still, America's water problems pale when compared to China's, said Jennifer Turner, director of the China Environment Forum at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.

But while China's secretive central government and lack of a water-rights system have made the nation's water pollution problems worse, the root cause is similar to America's, she said -- growing prosperity.

"China's negative [water pollution] trends are really due to the success of their economic reforms," which have placed pressure on traditional agriculture and the environment at the same time they've raised living standards for millions of Chinese, she said.

And that fact might just make China attractive for American companies with the right technology to solve pollution problems, she said.

General Electric is investing now to prepare for water scarcity, said Rengarajan Ramesh, general manager of GE's newly formed water technology division.

GE has built up the \$2.4 billion division by buying up companies with cutting-edge water treatment technologies, with the goal of eventually building an "eco-friendly" business unit with \$20 billion in annual revenues, he said.

GE's customers include industrial users like oil refineries, which use about 10 barrels of water to refine one barrel of oil, he said.

In fact, some of the company's most cutting-edge water treatment projects have been built in the Middle East, such as the company's new wastewater plant in Kuwait City, he said.

Tim Pickett, president of the applied sciences division of Zenon Membranes Solutions, a company purchased by GE in 2002, said his company's technology is being tested by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to remove selenium from agricultural runoff that has poisoned hundreds of thousands of acres in the western Central Valley.

"This type of forum is good to get people more aware of new technologies," he said. It's the kind of collaboration that people didn't really think about 20 years ago, he said.

One example could be applying technology developed for agricultural irrigation and applying it to urban landscaping, said Mike Baron, a representative of Walla Walla Sprinkler Co. based in Walla Walla, Wash.

America loses about half of the 7 billion gallons of water used on landscaping through inefficient application, said the EPA's Hanlon.

That means selling efficiencies developed for farmers -- such as sensors that detect moisture in soil -- to city water officials and residential developers is likely to be a growing business, Baron said.

Stone, of the American Ground Water Trust, advised that collaboration shouldn't end at business deals.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Despite the arguments of some environmental groups that private industry can only play a negative role in managing the planet's water supplies, "the private sector is far more of a solution than a problem," Stone argued.

But to apply the best of private-sector innovation to solving the world's water problems, business leaders must also work with politicians and policy makers.

"You've got to be the water policy leaders," Stone told the audience. "Shame on you if you don't." ###

**Southland's dry spell could get worse; Every place that supplies water to the region is dry -- a pattern that could eventually produce what researchers call the perfect drought**

***Los Angeles Times* – 3/31/07**

**By Bettina Boxall, staff writer**

Nature is pulling a triple whammy on Southern California this year. Whether it's the Sierra, the Southland or the Colorado River Basin, every place that provides water to the region is dry.

It's a rare and troubling pattern, and if it persists it could thrust the region into what researchers have dubbed the perfect Southern California drought: when nature shortchanges every major branch of the far-flung water network that sustains 18 million people.

Usually, it's reasonably wet in at least one of those places. But not this year.

The mountain snowpack vital to water imports from Northern California is at the lowest level in nearly two decades. The Los Angeles area has received record low rainfall this winter, contributing to an early wildfire season that included Friday's blaze in the Hollywood Hills. And the Colorado River system remains in the grip of one of the worst basin droughts in centuries.

"I have been concerned that we might be putting all the pieces in place to develop a new perfect drought," said UCLA geography professor Glen MacDonald, who has researched drought patterns in California and the Colorado River Basin over the last 1,000 years.

"You have extreme to severe drought extending over Southern California and also along the east and west slopes of the Sierra, and then you have it in the Colorado [basin], particularly Wyoming."

That, coupled with wet winter weather patterns in the southern Great Lakes region and the Northeast, MacDonald said, "is extremely similar to the last time we had a perfect drought, which was the late 1980s, early 1990s."

Thanks to a bountiful Sierra snowpack in the spring of 2006, the state's reservoirs are in good shape. Southern California water managers say they have ample supplies in reserve and are better prepared for a prolonged dry spell than they were two decades ago.

"We're watching this. We're not pleased. We're not worried, either," said Jeffrey Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the region's major water wholesaler. "If it does continue, we have prepared ourselves for a multiple-year drought."

"It used to be we thought that geographic diversity was enough" protection, he added. "In 1990 or so, we realized it really wasn't."

Since then, the water district has constructed a large reservoir in Riverside County and is storing more water underground.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The region's water agencies have also promoted conservation and recycling during the last two decades, steps that have helped Los Angeles keep water demand relatively flat at the same time the city added 1 million more people.

"We believe we will be able to meet the needs of the city for the coming year and beyond," said Thomas Erb, director of water resources at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which gets about half of its supplies from the Eastern Sierra.

The snowpack there is shaping up to be one of the lowest since the start of record-keeping in 1940. Twice during the 20th century — in the late 1950s and the early 1980s — drought strained all three regions that supply Southern California, said Scripps Institution of Oceanography hydrologist Hugo Hidalgo, who has studied drought patterns with MacDonald. "These events have been relatively rare."

They usually last for four or five years. But "the scary part," MacDonald said, is that ancient tree ring records indicate they can go on for a couple of decades — much longer than anything experienced in modern times.

"We believe that there were much more severe and prolonged simultaneous droughts in those regions during the period 1300 AD to about 900 AD," he added. "Once you start looking back in time, you realize that what we've seen in the historical record — the last 100, 150 years, where we have good measurements — that's really nothing compared to what nature can throw at us here."

MacDonald agreed that the state's large water districts "are actually doing a good job in terms of planning for a five- to seven-year drought."

But, he warned, "if you went into a decade or longer of persistent drought that affected the Sacramento [River Basin], the Los Angeles area and the Colorado, you would end up basically taxing all of the those water storage facilities, from the dams on the Colorado to what we have here, to beyond the breaking point."

The big reservoirs in the Colorado system, which last year provided the Metropolitan Water District with 30% of its deliveries, are roughly half empty as a result of a drought that began in 2000. Federal officials have said that within a few years they may be forced to cut Colorado deliveries, although Arizona and Nevada would be hit before California, which has senior water rights in the lower basin.

As a result of this spring's skimpy Sierra snowpack — it's at 46% of the normal statewide average — the State Water Project will reduce deliveries of Northern California water to the central and southern parts of the state, but not dramatically.

"One year a drought does not make, especially the way our system is plumbed. We have ample storage," said Arthur Hinojosa, chief of the hydrology branch for the California Department of Water Resources.

But he acknowledged that if the Sierra snowpack is poor again next winter, that "would probably create a lot of angst."

Maury Roos, the state's chief hydrologist, said that both groundwater and surface reservoir supplies were currently above average because of recent wet years — 2004-05 was the second-wettest year on record in Los Angeles. However, that "cushion won't be there for next winter" if the dry spell continues, he added.

"These dry years come often in pairs," Roos said. "There is a reasonable chance of that happening. Hopefully not."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Bill Patzert, the climatologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Cañada Flintridge, has said the Pacific is in an "El Niño-repellent" pattern that will favor drought in Southern California for years.

MacDonald said scientists have found that periods of simultaneous drought in Southern California, Northern California's Sacramento River Basin and the Colorado typically have been marked by cold water in the eastern Pacific off the North American coast — a condition that existed this winter.

A 2004 study by a team of researchers concluded that the western mega-droughts that occurred between 900 and 1300 took place during a warming period that drove up temperatures in the western Pacific, producing an upwelling of cool waters in the eastern Pacific that caused drier La Niña conditions to prevail. The researchers warned that global warming could promote severe drought in the West.

"This is the billion-dollar question," MacDonald said. "Will global warming push us into another prolonged perfect drought?" ###

### **Supply worries bring limits on water usage; Pessimistic officials concerned about possible drought next year**

***San Francisco Chronicle – 4/1/07***

**By Janine DeFao, staff writer**

(04-01) 04:00 PDT Santa Cruz -- The first local effects of California's unusually dry winter are about to show up in Surf City, where residents who give their lawns a daytime drink could end up with a ticket and the threat of having their water turned off.

For the first time in 15 years, this coastal city is worried about running low on water and will restrict when and how people can use it. Turning on sprinklers or open hoses between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. will be banned starting May 1, and anyone who violates the rule can be punished by a \$60 fine.

Santa Cruz isn't in danger of running out of water yet, but officials fear the city of 55,000 could go dry if rain is scarce again next winter.

"This is really a precautionary thing," said Toby Goddard, the city's water conservation manager. "It would be irresponsible for us not to take some action in this critically dry year in case we have a dry year again next year."

People around the Bay Area might face restrictions similar to those in Santa Cruz if the rain stays away again next winter, though no other agencies are making immediate plans.

Such restrictions follow the cyclical nature of California's rainfall patterns.

When Santa Cruz last restricted water use in 1992, Marin County had been prohibiting outdoor watering for three years and had a moratorium on new water hookups.

Even more stringent rationing, with daily limits of 50 gallons per person, were imposed in Marin during the 1975-77 drought, when Santa Cruz and much of Northern and Central California also rationed water.

Marin and Santa Cruz rely on the rain that falls locally. Paul Helliker, general manager of the Marin Municipal Water District, said the county's reservoirs are in good shape because of last year's heavier-than-normal rainfall. The story is the same in reservoirs that collect Sierra runoff for millions of customers elsewhere in the Bay Area who get their water from the Hetch Hetchy system or the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Santa Cruz's Loch Lomond reservoir also is in fine shape, but the area gets 70 percent of its water from surface sources including springs, streams and the San Lorenzo River, Goddard said. The reservoir holds only half a year's supply of water, and officials fear it could dwindle during summer months when water usage jumps to 14 million to 15 million gallons per day from 8 million gallons per day in winter.

With Santa Cruz having received only 14 inches of rain since July, compared with an average to date of 30 inches, the river's runoff is at just 21 percent of normal, Goddard said.

That led the city's water department -- which serves 90,000 customers in Santa Cruz, surrounding unincorporated areas and parts of Capitola -- to enact the watering restrictions.

Daytime use of drip irrigation and hoses with hand shutoff valves will be allowed, as will car washing, Goddard said.

Professional landscapers will be allowed to apply for an exemption from the restrictions.

Officials said they expect the rules to reduce water use by only about 5 percent, but they said the restrictions will help bring public attention to the importance of conservation in a dry year.

Goddard also said enforcement will be increased, with the possibility that repeat violators could have their water service turned off.

That's good news to Ros Munro, who said she is irked when she sees water from the sprinklers at her neighbors' empty vacation homes spilling into the street.

The self-described "water-wise" Munro was watering her front garden Friday before putting down mulch to help stop evaporation. She saves rainwater from her downspouts to use in the garden, which she has planted with drought-tolerant plants such as poppies and lavender.

She said she's not worried that the water restrictions will harm her carefully tended plot.

"If things die, things die. I'm not stressed about it," she said. "I want to play my part."

Those sentiments were shared by other residents of a beach town known for its environmental ethos.

"I'd like everybody to share the burden," Joe Troise said as he washed his car -- something he does only twice a year, he was quick to add.

But Troise, who recently moved from Sausalito and lived through the water restrictions of the '90s drought, questioned how effective such measures are.

"I don't recall any high level of enforcement or compliance," he said.

Bill Kocher, director of Santa Cruz's water department, said no one can predict what kind of weather next winter will bring.

"If next winter looks like this year, people will be thanking us," he said.

And if it doesn't?

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"We're water people," he said. "We're paid to be pessimists." ###

### FLOOD CONTROL AND LEVEES:

**Fargo urges flood tax; \$326 million assessment vital to lure government funds to area, she says**  
***Sacramento Bee* – 3/31/07**

**By Matt Weiser, staff writer**

Calling flood protection vital to Sacramento's economy, Mayor Heather Fargo on Friday urged residents to support a \$326 million property tax assessment that would lure more than \$2 billion in state and federal funds to the region for flood control projects.

The assessment, proposed by the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, is now being decided by local property owners in a special vote-by-mail election. Ballots are due back to the agency by April 19.

About 140,000 property owners are affected by the election, which would replace two existing flood assessment districts.

The average property tax increase under the new assessment would be \$35 per year.

"The entire region would be affected if we ever did have a flood," said Fargo, who is also SAFCA's current chairwoman. "That is why we are working so hard to get this assessment approved. This is clearly an investment worth making."

Fargo's remarks came in her annual State of the City address to the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, an early supporter of the assessment. About 760 people attended the event.

"We're not going to have a very viable economy if we're all under 5 or 15 feet of water," said chamber CEO Matt Mahood.

"We're the chamber of commerce. We're not for taxes and fees on business. But in this case, it seemed to make a lot of sense to invest in our own infrastructure on this public safety issue."

Also Friday, federal agencies rolled out a final environmental impact report on the region's largest flood-control project: the mammoth plan to modify Folsom Dam, which protects Sacramento from the volatile American River.

The project has seen its share of trouble. In 2005, it was thrown off track when initial construction bids came in three times higher than expected.

Since then, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers have worked together on a redesign. The project now centers on a new auxiliary spillway to be built just east of the existing main dam.

The new spillway would serve two purposes: It would have six new outlet gates below the water surface to release water faster, effectively boosting flood-storage capacity; and the spillway itself would allow much bigger flows from the surface that might otherwise destroy the dam.

The project also calls for a 3.5-foot height increase in the main dam and the earthen dikes that contain Folsom Reservoir to increase flood storage, said Army Corps project manager Creg Hucks.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Cooperation by the two agencies resulted in huge cost and time savings. Officials now estimate the dam modifications and the raise will cost \$1.35 billion.

That is several hundred million dollars cheaper than the most recent estimates, and about \$1 billion cheaper than the previous design, said Jeff McCracken, Bureau of Reclamation spokesman.

SAFCA's share of the dam project is about \$146 million.

Construction is expected to begin in September and finish in 2014, providing 200-year flood protection or the ability to withstand a flood with a half-percent chance of occurring in any year.

The dam raise would boost protection to the 240-year level, said Hucks. But more study is needed to determine whether the raise can also be finished by 2014.

"Our goal is to deliver the most flood protection at the earliest possible date to the city of Sacramento," Hucks said. "The outlook is good."

Hucks said the two agencies took extra steps to ensure confidence in their new cost estimates. Economic experts from the Army Corps' Walla Walla District were more deeply involved in reviewing costs, and the corps hired a Colorado consultant for a peer review of the costs.

Another key change in the project is that planners now intend to keep Folsom Point open to the public during construction, said McCracken. The popular area had been proposed as a construction staging area.

But plans now calls for staging equipment elsewhere and moving construction vehicles through the area in a huge trench. Public traffic would cross the trench on a bridge to reach Folsom Point.

On Sunday and Monday, the state Department of Water Resources will conduct aerial levee surveys in the Sacramento area.

A helicopter will fly low over levees in Sacramento and West Sacramento using laser imaging to gather levee elevation data.

The data will help the state decide how to spend \$4.1 billion in bond funds that voters approved in November for flood projects.

Fargo said Sacramento needs the local tax assessment to ensure its share of this state money.

"Sacramento is a leader in showing the rest of the state how to do flood protection right, and we need to ensure the state rewards our good behavior," she said. ###

### **New Tool In The Local Fight Against Flooding**

**CBS Channel 13 (Sacramento) – 4/1/07**

**Steve Large, reporting**

(CBS13) SACRAMENTO Those of us who live in the Sacramento valley know that we are in a massive flood zone. Today new technology brought into our area, will help figure out the best way to protect us, from disaster.

It's no ordinary helicopter.

Its been transformed into a hovering, radar imaging machine, helping California geologists figure out what

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

levees in our valley, need to be fixed to protect us from a 200-year flood.

Sacramento most recently got a taste of mother nature's power on news years of 2006.

With that as a reminder, lawmakers and scientists are trying to move fast, to prevent a deadly scenario. The helicopter is helping.

"This method of using a helicopter based radar system will allow us to rapidly collect data over the 350 miles of urban levees in under a week," says Steve Mahnke with the Department of Water Resources.

Scientists doing this work from the ground would have taken up to four months. California will use the detailed images this low flying copter brings in, to help decide how to spend 4-point-one billion dollars in bond funds. That's money that could save lives the next time we see these blue skies bring severe weather.

You may have seen that helicopter flying at about 500 feet overhead today. The survey will continue tomorrow.  
###

### **Fixes go downhill; State taxpayers face bill for feds' work**

***Sacramento Bee* – 4/1/07**

**By Deb Kollars, staff writer**

The sides of two new levees protecting West Sacramento -- finished three years ago by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a \$32 million project -- have fallen off in certain places and now need \$8.5 million worth of repairs.

The corps has acknowledged that the two "slips," as they are called, indicate "design deficiencies" that must be investigated, redesigned and repaired.

But it may be state taxpayers who pick up the tab because the corps doesn't have money to fix the problem.

Late last week, top officials for the California Department of Water Resources decided to dip into the \$4.1 billion Proposition 1E levee bond fund that voters approved in November to help cover the costs.

State officials don't like being stuck with part or possibly all of the bill. But they say they have no choice, given the need to protect 40,000 people living in West Sacramento from possible flooding.

"Of course nobody likes to spend money to fix something that just got built," said Rod Mayer, chief of the department's flood management division. "We like to get it right the first time."

The slips -- also called slumps, slope movement, levee distress, surface failure and heaved material in assorted state and federal documents -- are on the levees of the Yolo Bypass, an area north and west of West Sacramento that fills like a lake when the Sacramento River runs high.

The first slip showed up after the 2006 New Year's storms on a stretch of levee north of Interstate 80. It involved a grassy area on the land side, 30 feet long at the top and 100 feet at the base, where clay soils became saturated and slipped off in chunks.

Four months later, after another round of heavy rains, the second slip occurred on a bypass levee south of I-80, this time on the water side, records show. It was 250 feet long, and again involved waterlogged clay soil that collapsed. The slumping caused the heavy-duty layer of rock on the surface, known as rip-rap, to fall away.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The slips came as a disappointment to local, state and federal flood control officials.

Just two years earlier, the corps had finished a major flood control project, begun in 1997, that rebuilt, raised and greatly fortified levees surrounding West Sacramento, including those on the bypass.

To stand atop one of the bypass levees is a far different experience from walking the narrower and less armored levees of the American and Sacramento rivers. These are some of the widest, stoutest levees in the region, rip-rapped all the way to the top.

When work concluded, the corps told West Sacramento the city had 400-year protection from flooding - a far higher safety margin than the minimal 100-year protection in other areas. (New underseepage studies indicate West Sacramento's protection is much less than previously believed.)

Ken Ruzich is the general manager of Reclamation District 900, which maintains the levees surrounding West Sacramento. The slips, he said, are on the surfaces of the slopes, not deep within, and do not pose an imminent danger.

But simply patching the surfaces after high water is not an acceptable solution, Ruzich said.

"It's a little frustrating," he said. "The idea is you spend \$30 million on levees, and then every time it rains, you have to go back in and do repairs. It's just a matter of finishing up and doing it right."

Caroline Quinn, West Sacramento's assistant director of public works and community development, said that over the last year, the city has pressed the corps and sought help from the state to address the problems.

"We have two areas of levee that have never performed as they should," Quinn said. "We look at it as a problem with the original design."

According to Ruzich and other engineers, the slips likely can be blamed on bands of clay layered into the levees decades ago. In most other parts of the newly constructed levees, the corps removed old clay materials and replaced them with more stable soils.

But for some reason, in the areas with the slips, clay soils were left intact. #

### **Levees protecting West Sacramento need \$8.5 million in repairs**

***Associated Press – 4/1/07***

SACRAMENTO (AP) -- Two levees protecting about 40,000 Central California residents from potentially catastrophic flooding need \$8.5 million worth of repairs, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The corps -- which finished the levees three years ago as part of a \$32 million project -- said the damage indicates "design deficiencies" that must be investigated, redesigned and repaired. The damage is primarily on the levees of the Yolo Bypass, an area north and west of West Sacramento that fills like a lake when the Sacramento River runs high.

Late last week, officials at the California Department of Water Resources said they could use funds from the \$4.1 billion Proposition 1E levee bond fund that voters approved in November to help cover the costs.

But the state of the levees has left flood control experts disappointed. Three years ago, corps engineers told West Sacramento officials that the city had 400-year protection from flooding -- a far higher safety margin than the minimal 100-year protection in other areas.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"Of course nobody likes to spend money to fix something that just got built," said Rod Mayer, chief of the flood management division of the California Department of Water Resources. "We like to get it right the first time."

Ken Ruzich said the damage is on the surfaces of the slopes -- not deep within the levees. They need to be repaired but do not pose imminent danger.

"The idea is you spend \$30 million on levees, and then every time it rains, you have to go back in and do repairs," Ruzich said. "It's just a matter of finishing up and doing it right."

The first sign of distress came immediately after the 2006 New Year's storms on a stretch of levee north of Interstate 80. Clay soils became saturated and slipped off in chunks.

Four months later, after another storm, damage appeared on a bypass levee south of I-80, again involving waterlogged clay soil that collapsed. The slumping caused the heavy-duty layer of rock on the surface, known as riprap, to fall away. ###

### DEVELOPMENT:

**Market lures farmers from conservation; Development offers and Bush's ethanol initiative entice owners to leave a land protection program**

*Los Angeles Times* – 4/1/07

**By Tim Reiterman, staff writer**

WOODLAND, CALIF. — Over the last two decades, the federal government has built the nation's largest conservation program for private lands by spending billions of dollars to encourage farmers to protect land that is prone to erosion and important to wildlife.

Now the Conservation Reserve Program is about to shrink by millions of acres as part of the Bush administration's plans for stimulating corn production for ethanol to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

Federal agricultural officials recently suspended enrollment in the program for at least a year. They also have been considering releasing farmers and ranchers from existing contracts that protect land already in the program, although it is unlikely they will do that this year.

The enrollment suspension comes as many California landowners feel increasing pressure to leave the conservation program and convert their property to more lucrative crops or home building.

The \$2-billion-per-year federal program pays owners not to cultivate land that is prone to erosion, marginal for farming or significant for wildlife habitat.

Since its inception in 1985, the voluntary program has protected 2 million acres of wetlands, planted 1.7 million acres of grass and trees along streams and other waterways, reduced soil erosion by 450 million tons per year and increased the duck population by millions through improved habitat.

About 37 million acres of private land are enrolled — more than the total acreage of the national wildlife refuge system in the lower 48 states. But U.S. Department of Agriculture officials expect the program to decline by several million acres within the next few years as existing contracts expire.

Conservation groups say the administration's strategy is counterproductive. "Most of this land was enrolled because it is highly erodible or very environmentally sensitive," said Terry Riley, vice president of policy at

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. "So why on Earth would we be encouraging people to get out of the program and put it into production, which encourages more runoff, fertilizer and pesticides?"

Moreover, conservationists argue that opening protected lands for corn production does not make sense because much of it is not suited for that crop. "What are we trying to accomplish here?" asked Jennifer Mock Schaeffer, farm bill coordinator for the Assn. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

In its proposed alternative-fuel rules, the Environmental Protection Agency said in September that raising corn on conservation lands that are erosion-prone, steep, or near lakes and streams posed risks to water quality.

Federal officials in California say most of the 150,000 acres of the state's enrolled land is steep, unirrigated and unsuited for corn.

USDA officials acknowledge that not all land in the program will be appropriate for corn production — and they say they will take steps to protect the most environmentally sensitive places.

"There is a very difficult balancing act that has to be played out over the next couple of years to adjust to this biofuels boom," said Keith Collins, USDA's chief economist. "If thought of as a seesaw, one seat would be historically tight crop markets, with ethanol driving tightness in corn.... On the other seat would be the environmental benefits of the [program], which are considerable."

Based on the contracts expiring in the next few years, agency officials project that about 11 million acres will leave the program by 2010 and potentially be available for crop production, development or other uses. However, they say some of that reduction would be offset when new general enrollments resume in either in 2008 or 2009.

The administration was hoping that plans for corn plantings would increase, and on Friday put the number at 90.5 million acres—the largest total since 1944.

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns on Friday said he did not anticipate releasing owners from conservation contracts this year, but said he would not hesitate to make future adjustments to USDA programs.

"There will be another decision point next year [on conservation contracts] because of the increase in ethanol demand," said USDA senior economist Larry Salathe.

In February, many agribusiness groups, including beef, pork and poultry producers, called on the USDA to permit withdrawal of conservation lands without penalty.

On Friday, some organizations expressed disappointment in Johanns' decision and said it was premature because weather and market forces could cut into corn production. "There is land in the CRP that can be farmed in a sustainable way," said Randall Gordon, vice president of the National Grain and Feed Assn. "We believe producers should have the option to bring that land out of the program."

Although California conservation lands are not expected to yield much corn, some owners may be tempted to withdraw land to grow wheat or other grains that are rising in price along with corn. And others may see money-making opportunities in growing products such as wheat straw, if scientists find a commercially viable way to make ethanol from them.

Ethanol demand has soared as California and other states have banned the gasoline additive MTBE, which boosts octane but pollutes water.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Hundred-car trains haul corn from the Midwest to two major ethanol plants in the Central Valley, but they produce only about 70 million gallons a year — a small fraction of the nearly 1 billion gallons Californians consume.

"California has not grown a great deal of feed corn over the years for any purposes, but that is going to change because of the price," said former state elections chief Bill Jones, chairman of Pacific Ethanol Inc.

Most of California's conservation acreage is on farms and ranches of San Luis Obispo, Siskiyou and Yolo counties. Much of that land historically produced wheat, barley, oats or other crops raised without irrigation. And hundreds of millions of dollars are now being poured into cellulosic technology that could turn the stems of such crops into ethanol.

Larry Gross, chief executive of Los Angeles-based Altra Inc., which has an ethanol plant in Tulare County, said conservation lands in California "would be a great place" to raise raw material for plants using new ethanol production techniques.

At the same time, the state's expanding real estate market is another powerful inducement for farmers in some areas to take land out of the federal conservation program.

In rural Yolo County, where rolling grasslands and oak woodlands are within commuting distance of Sacramento and the Bay Area, there is growing pressure both to build homes and plant vineyards, which can bring in more money than conservation payments that average about \$30 per acre annually.

Four developers have approached Yolo County farmer Dave Long, who has almost half of his 250-acre farm in the program. "I think this will be covered with houses or commercial buildings, maybe in 15 or 20 years," said Long, who lives near a major freeway interchange.

This past year, owners of half the land eligible for contract renewals or extensions in the county opted to withdraw from the program — among the highest rates in the state. Federal district conservationist Phil Hogan estimated that acreage will drop from about 18,000 to half that in the next few years.

The family of former state Agriculture Secretary Richard Rominger has 250 acres of land enrolled in the program. On part of it, the Romingers have planted oaks and native grasses, and built a pond where geese flock.

"The importance of the program is the reduction of soil erosion," said Rominger, who also served as deputy Agriculture secretary in the Clinton administration.

Nevertheless, the Romingers may convert some of their protected acreage to vineyards, although with erosion controls. "There is a distinct possibility we would take some land out [of the program] and put grapes on it," said Rominger's son Bruce.

Growers are caught in a vise, said Yolo County agriculture commissioner Rick Landon. "They have development pressure driving up the cost of their land — and that is an incentive to not stay in farming, or to not stay in the program," he said. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### EDITORIALS:

#### **Guest Column: Water cutoff demands new ideas**

***Bakersfield Californian – 4/5/07***

**By Fred Starrh, president of the Kern County Water Agency board of directors**

An Alameda County Superior Court judge has issued an earth-shaking decision that could shut down the State Water Project within 60 days. All water deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta will cease unless the Department of Water Resources can get a permit from the California Department of Fish and Game within that time.

Kern County receives much of its water from the Delta -- as do approximately 25 million Northern, Central and Southern California residents. If the proposed decision is finalized, the consequences for Kern County and the state will be disastrous.

KCWA is making every effort to ensure that this procedural snafu does not shutdown Kern County's water supply. We are seeking significant changes to the proposed decision and will request that the judgment not be enforced during appeal.

To further protect our farms, families and businesses, we are working with our members to prepare a contingency plan that ensures adequate water supplies if appeals are unsuccessful.

However, the real solution must come from DWR and DFG.

The issue is whether DWR has the proper "take" permit from DFG -- responsible for protecting fish species -- to operate SWP pumps. Pumping has the incidental effect of harming three fish species that are protected under the California Endangered Species Act.

Although DWR and water agencies throughout California vigorously dispute the proposed decision, the court found that DWR lacked the appropriate permits and needed to obtain them or shut down the pumps.

The court reviewed only written agreements between DWR and DFG and ignored many programs DWR has to protect fish species and mitigate the SWP's impact on them. DWR's efforts to protect these species are extensive, amounting to tens of millions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of water per year.

DFG did not participate in the case and the court emphasized that a case of this magnitude -- affecting up to \$400 billion of the state's economy -- should have included testimony from DFG. DWR and DFG must coordinate a response to the court's proposed decision and make it clear that DWR has the appropriate authorization from DFG under existing agreements.

The decision illustrates the conflict between using the Delta to convey water to the state's farms and cities and protecting the Delta ecosystem.

Growing consensus from scientists and state leaders is that the Delta is unsustainable and the water delivery system is failing. In addition to this ruling's effects, the Delta water supply and infrastructure system face other unprecedented risks, including earthquakes, major floods and global warming impacts.

The proposed decision is yet another example of why California must rethink how it moves water through the Delta to the San Joaquin Valley, the Bay Area and Southern California.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The Public Policy Institute of California recently identified alternatives for solving the Delta's problems. Constructing a new water conveyance facility around the Delta, rather than through it, is one of them. The court's decision illustrates that the need for such a facility is urgent and the time to act is now. ###

**Editorial: Megadrought in our future; The next one may not be as bad as in the year 1112, but it wouldn't hurt to prepare**

***Long Beach Press Telegram – 4/5/07***

Southern Californians have learned better than most to be careful not to waste much water. But that may not be nearly good enough.

A study released this week by the journal Science says the entire Southwest, from Southern California to southern Colorado, by 2050 could become a Dust Bowl reminiscent of the great drought of the 1930s.

The prediction is based on data in 19 computer models that show a high level of agreement. Only one of the models produced results that are happier, from a consumer's point of view.

Those of us old enough to remember California's last serious drought, which reached a low point in about 1991, won't be around long enough to worry about dry times in 2050. But if this is the beginning of a long, gradual decline in wet years, we'd be wise to start changing our behavior now.

Things could get grim. Jonathan Overpeck, a climate researcher at the University of Arizona, told the L.A. Times the study results are "pretty darned scary." Such a drought could force dramatic changes in the region's economy and in the way ordinary people live.

In 1991, water authorities cut supplies to agriculture by 75 percent and to urban areas by 25 percent. Everybody survived nicely, which is a good sign, although the conservation techniques of that era wouldn't do the job if things really dry up.

The authors of the recent study were inclined to blame global warming for the latest drying trends. But even if you reject the global warming theory, don't bother arguing the point. This region has been capable of spectacular droughts, judging by evidence of climate trends going back thousands of years.

According to the state's Department of Water Resources, one of the dry spells in the so-called Medieval Megadrought lasted more than two centuries prior to the year 1112. Turning down your lawn sprinklers is not going to get you through one of those.

Still, there's room for optimism. Long Beach's Water Department, for example, is well along in testing a desalination pilot project that could turn brackish water to drinkable water for only double what you're paying for water now. And you could replace that thirsty landscaping, which drinks a whole lot more water than your family does, with the kind of desert plants that belong in these parts.

Or we could just change our thinking about water. We don't actually drink enough of it to matter. What we really do is waste it on toilets, showers, plantings and industrial uses that could do just as well with recycled, lesser quality stuff. As long as there's enough water to irrigate food crops and wet our palates, we ought to be able to figure out a way to get by.

Meantime, though, it wouldn't be a bad idea to turn down the sprinklers or even replant your yard with something hardier. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **Editorial: Conserve water during repair - and for long haul**

***Inland Valley Daily Bulletin – 4/5/07***

Inland Valley residents are again being called upon to reduce their water use for about nine days so that a critical pipeline can be repaired.

Local water customers have responded quite well to such calls in the past, and we're confident they will do so in this instance.

We'd like to see them not only cut back significantly for the nine days, but also use the occasion to make some reductions in their long-term water consumption. Signs of drought are gathering.

Here's the immediate problem: The Rialto Feeder pipeline, which provides water imported from Northern California to nine local cities, has a severely damaged section. Repairs are scheduled from April 16 to 24. The damage was discovered last week in Rancho Cucamonga, and the Metropolitan Water District wants to fix its pipeline before summer heat drives up water demand.

It varies widely from city to city, but overall about 30 percent of the water used in the nine affected cities is imported.

Customers in Chino, Chino Hills, Claremont, Fontana, La Verne, Montclair, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga and Upland will need to conserve water for the nine days or so

Residents who have helped to accommodate pipeline repairs in the past few years know the drill. It's especially important to cut outdoor water use to almost nothing as of April 16: Don't water lawns and landscapes, don't fill swimming pools and spas, don't hand wash cars, don't hose down driveways or sidewalks. And don't put in your spring plantings until the shutdown is over.

Indoors, cut back by running only full loads in clothes washers and dishwashers, taking shorter showers, and not running the water while you hand-wash dishes, brush your teeth or shave.

And obviously, it would be best to water your lawn, fill your spa and wash your clothes and your car on April 15, so you can start out the conservation period in good shape.

When a Claremont section of the same major pipeline needed repair in June 2004, water agencies hoped for 20 percent to 30 percent conservation, but instead saw as much as 50 percent cutbacks. So we're confident local residents will rise to the temporary challenge once again.

But there are water challenges that go far beyond this repair job.

This has so far been the driest rain year on record for parts of Southern California. The Sierra snowpack, which provides the Northern California water we import, is 46 percent of normal for this time of year. And the Colorado River Basin is experiencing one of the worst droughts in centuries, according to scientists.

Southern California does not have a water delivery problem this year, but if next year is as dry as this one both locally and in the Sierra Nevada, we could be in trouble.

That's why it makes sense to make small changes now that will save you water over the long haul.

When you put in your spring plants - after April 24, of course - why not use native plants such as ceonothus and toyon? Once they're established, you almost never have to water them; after all, they have lived on our foothill and mountain slopes for millennia, so they're suited for dry conditions. Take a

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

look at the possibilities at the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, or head to your nursery and ask for native plants and other species that require little water.

And wherever possible, install drip irrigation instead of sprinklers to avoid water loss from evaporation.

A few little changes in your yard will save you water - and lots of money - and help boost the local water supply for years to come. ###

### **Opinion:**

#### **Water will be scarce**

#### **We can't ignore the looming crisis of diminishing supplies.**

#### ***Fresno Bee – 4/5/07***

The future of water supplies in California can be described in one simple phrase: increasing scarcity. As population grows and demand increases, climate change is almost certain to reduce supplies. That will dramatically alter the landscape, in more ways than one.

That's one of the conclusions that has emerged from the first International Water Technology Conference, being held through today at California State University, Fresno.

As dire as predictions for California's water future have become, we may comfort ourselves -- if that's the right word -- with the knowledge that things could get very much worse in other parts of the world.

In China, for instance, the astonishing pollution of rivers and lakes has led to frantic overdrafting of underground water. That has led to massive problems, including subsidence in some cities of more than six feet. As Beijing prepares to host the 2008 Olympics, one of the great concerns is whether sufficient supplies of water will be available for hundreds of thousands of visitors.

In Africa, pollution and drought combine to turn vast tracts of land into desert, forcing entire populations to migrate in search of water. The danger of armed conflict over water is great and growing.

Here in California our water wars are fought with legal briefs instead of guns -- at least today. But the potential problems are real and frightening.

That's why efforts such as this week's water conference are so valuable. Water experts from around the world came to share information and display new technologies, which will be crucial to solving the looming crisis.

And we had better grit our teeth for increased costs. An Environmental Protection Agency study in 2002 estimated that keeping up with the expected demand for water in 2020 could cost the nation more than a half-trillion dollars. Water is a commodity as well as a necessity, and Americans have grown used to having their water supplies heavily subsidized. That will change, and the impact will be deeply felt.

New storage capacity, both above and below ground, is needed, but it will be costly and take many years to bring on line. We can all begin to conserve water right now -- today -- and there is enormous potential for savings in doing so.

New and improved technologies like the ones discussed at the water conference have an important place in the effort. Perhaps the best thing that happens at such gatherings is the cross-fertilization that takes place between experts in different aspects of water issues. As an example, the conference heard suggestions that new irrigation techniques in agriculture may have applications for urban residential landscapes, which account for an enormous amount of the water used by city dwellers.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

We're all in this one together, and the sooner we learn to work across the spectrum of public and private institutions and individuals, the sooner we'll see solutions we can all live with.###

**Editorial: Cut off water, dry up Kern; An Alameda County judge must be convinced to allow delta water to keep flowing down aqueduct**

***Bakersfield Californian – 4/3/07***

Kern County will suffer severe economic and environmental damage if a court order that threatens to shut down the California Aqueduct is not delayed.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch ruled the state lacked a permit to kill chinook salmon and delta smelt as a consequence of pumping water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta into the Aqueduct.

Roesch gave the state 60 days to obtain the permit from the Department of Fish and Game or shut down pumping. He has scheduled a hearing Friday. State Department of Water Resources officials must convince Roesch not to follow through with his threat. They also must move quickly to obtain the permit.

The entire Central Valley will lose irrigation water from the State Water Project if the pumping is halted. The State Water Project accounts for about 21 percent of all the water used in Kern County.

Numerous urban water districts in the valley and Southern California will also be at risk of losing drinking water. The project pumps \$300 billion into the state's economy annually, according to Lester Snow, director of the Department of Water Resources.

Environmental damage to habitat restoration efforts specifically the Kern Water Bank also could result if pumping is stopped, according to state officials. The Kern Water Bank stores water in wet years for use by various water districts in dry years.

Overall, Snow said he was "perplexed" by the ruling, adding, "Environmentally, it would be unacceptable to curtail all deliveries from the State Water Project. There are wetlands areas that would suffer from a loss of Delta water, and there could be overpumping of the groundwater basin."

In a teleconference with newspaper editors, including The Californian, Snow made several points he and other officials said they would present to the court in seeking to have the order modified:

- \* It will be impossible to do the paperwork to obtain the permit within 60 days.
- \* In effect, DWR has met the requirements for justifying a permit through a series of operating agreements it has with the Department of Fish and Game in recent years.
- \* The court's order doesn't take into account economic damage that its ruling would have.
- \* The ruling fails to take into account numerous environmental initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years, yielding benefits that offset any adverse circumstances a missing take permit might have.

Those are compelling arguments. The flow of water from the delta must continue. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **Guest Commentary: Don't shut off Valley's water**

***Visalia Times Delta – 4/4/07***

**By Sen. Roy Ashburn, R-Bakersfield, represents the 18th Senate District including Tulare, Kern, Inyo and San Bernardino Counties**

California's Central Valley was transformed from a semi-arid, desert-like region to the agricultural wonder it is today by simply adding water. Our fertile soils and pleasant climate allow us to feed and clothe our nation and many nations around the world.

The State Water Project, operated by the Department of water Resource provides water to more than 23 million Californians and more than 750,000 acres of the nation's most productive agricultural land.

Gov. Schwarzenegger toured the Central Valley this past week calling for billions in badly needed funding for more dams, more water storage, and improvements to the Delta. The governor noted that "as the nation's largest single source of drinking water, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta supplies 25 million people in California, which is two-thirds of the population, with water. ... the Delta is the lifeblood of our 32 billion dollar agriculture industry, irrigating millions of acres of highly productive farmland." Also this week, however, one judge took steps to change all that with the stroke of a pen. In ruling on a lawsuit over "endangered" fish sometimes caught in the pumping mechanism at the Banks Pumping Plant in Tracy, Judge Frank Roesch of Alameda County chose to rule on a semantic technicality, making demands that will shut down the flow of water through the Central Valley within 60 days.

The judge's ruling highlights the underlying problem that the state faces in providing water to our vast population and teeming economy. We can spend billions on water infrastructure projects, but if we haven't addressed the consequences of the California Environmental Quality Act along with the many endangered species laws and regulatory hurdles to the storage and transfer of water in our state, then those efforts will be futile. The lawsuit and the judge's decision highlight the ultimate trade-off between extreme environmental measures and every day life in California. The conflict is not new. This battle of priorities has served to stifle agricultural production and economic growth in our state for several decades now.

The Banks Pumping Plant is the very heart of the California Water Project, pumping our state's life blood in canals to cities in the Bay Area, farms in the Central Valley and all of Southern California. Without this precious water, farming, business and daily life in California will grind to a halt.

The issue that Judge Roesch ruled on was whether the Department of Water Resources has obtained an official permit known as a "take" permit for the protected fish that are sometimes swallowed by the pumps. Take permits are usually required by private property owners, corporations or local government projects where protected species are occasionally killed in the normal course of business.

The operation of the Banks Pumping Plant is already regulated by State and Federal environmental regulations. The Department of Water Resources has also entered into agreements with state and federal agencies to provide a number of fishery protections, many of those agreements voluntarily.

In short, the loss of occasional protected fish is not news and the authorities have been working closely with Water Resources to monitor these accidental losses. In fact, the court did not find that any harm was being caused by the plant. The only transgression is that the Department of Water Resources was not holding one kind of permit. For not having the preferred bureaucratic paperwork the judge has ordered the Department to shut down pumping operations at the Banks Plant within 60 days. Both the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Game agree that 60 days is not enough time to process the permit that the judge is looking for. In the lawsuit no one was able to demonstrate any harm to California's fish populations, yet the harm to our state's economy, jobs and way of life will be severe.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Clearly the Governor understands the critical need to keep water flowing across the Central Valley and therefore the seriousness of this misguided court decision. As California's head of state he has the ability to direct both the Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game to take immediate steps toward a solution. One proposal is for Fish and Game to issue a temporary permit for the entire State Water project to solve this and any other similar legal conflicts that could erupt in the immediate future.

Resolving the Banks Pumping case right now is necessary but ultimately will not solve the larger problem. This case is a wake up call for serious reform of CEQA and endangered species laws with respect to the transport and storage of our state's lifeblood. Without sufficient water, we might as well hang a "Closed for Business" sign at California's state borders. By keeping our water flowing though, we can continue to be the economic engine of success and prosperity that has always characterized California. ###

### **Editorial: Shut the spigot**

***San Francisco Chronicle – 4/4/07***

FOR YEARS, environmentalists, sportfishermen and editorial pages -- including this one -- have been sounding alarm bells about the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta's collapsing ecosystem and its rapidly declining endangered fish populations. For years, developers and our state and local governments have offered vague promises to do something about it -- all the while pumping more and more freshwater out of the delta as though their livelihoods depended on it (which, in the case of developers, it does). Now, thanks to a nervy ruling from Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch, something must get done -- or the pumps will be shut off in less than 60 days, threatening deliveries of drinking and agricultural water to 25 million Californians. It's an outrage that it takes a crisis of these proportions to force our state officials to comply with the law. If our own government doesn't take the state's Endangered Species Act seriously, how can it effectively police others?

Roesch's ruling is simple and unequivocal. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) doesn't have a required permit to kill threatened Chinook salmon and delta smelt, which is what happens when they get caught in the giant pumps. Roesch responded to the department the way he would have done with any private individual in the same situation: he shut it down.

Of course, Roesch's ruling won't shut down the pumps in 60 days -- there's too much at stake, and too many legal maneuvers that interested parties can employ to keep the water flowing. It's already set off a firestorm in Sacramento, where angry state senators are demanding to know why DWR didn't get the permit almost two years ago, when they first dragged the department in for a legislative hearing on this very subject. Last week, the senators called the department in again, at the end of a regular calendar hearing, to find out why they hadn't complied years ago -- and were thoroughly underwhelmed by their explanations.

Those explanations are as follows: "We felt that we had the coverage for our program to be grandfathered into the (Endangered Species Act)," said Lester Snow, director of the Department of Water Resources. "And after that first Senate hearing, we initiated efforts to get a natural communities conservation plan -- a way to long-term, comprehensive compliance." That plan is called the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and it will take years for participants to gather all the possibilities and execute one.

In other words, our government officials had decided that it was OK to make assumptions about their compliance -- even after being told that they were not complying -- and, in case that didn't work, to stall. Outrageous.

As for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, the last thing the delta needs is another plan, committee or project. Over the years, it has had more of those than it can count -- and all of them, by the way,

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

pointed to the same dire outcome -- unless California stopped its unsustainable water management practices. We don't need another three years to get to that conclusion again, and the fish don't have that long to wait. Stop the killing, water regulators, or stop those pumps. ###

**Editorial: California drying; South state drought a reminder of importance of local conservation**  
***Santa Rosa Press Democrat – 4/4/07***

Southern California meteorologists are calling it the "perfect drought."

The three sources of drinking water for Southern California - Sierra snowpack, the Colorado River basin and regional rainfall - were much lower than normal this year. Fortunately, last year's high rainfall means there is still plenty of water in storage.

The question is, what will happen if this weather pattern continues next year? Or for a decade or more, as occurred in the period between 900 and 1300, when the world was warming in much the same way scientists predict global warming will affect the region?

Through conservation and by recycling wastewater, Los Angeles water demand has been relatively flat over the last two decades, despite the addition of a million new residents. Further reductions will be more difficult to achieve.

Sonoma County residents who wonder why this is relevant to their own lives should consider the following: A prolonged drought in the south will place more pressure on Northern California to share its water.

This is another of the many reasons that Sonoma County must aggressively pursue opportunities to reuse wastewater and to conserve fresh water. Some day the perfect drought will come to Northern California, too.  
###

**Column: Can latest water-policy ideas stifle our yawns?**  
***Fresno Bee – 4/3/07***

**By Bill McEwen, Bee columnist**

People tossing and turning at night might want to forsake prescription drugs or counting sheep and simply start boning up on California water policy.

Our H2O wars have become like a tired movie shown on an endless loop.

The names might change, but the plot remains virtually the same: big promises, expensive studies, drawn-out lawsuits and political battles, and ultimately, citizen fatigue.

Toss in the fact that many of us take water for granted -- unless it's suddenly expensive or unavailable - and you have the formula for a night's rest.

I bring this up because state leaders are talking about the Peripheral Canal again as a way of saving fish and the ravaged Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, an estuary providing fresh water for 23 million Californians.

Voters, you might remember, rejected such a canal 25 years ago, in part because Northern Californians didn't want Southern Californians "stealing their water."

The idea of increasing water storage on the San Joaquin River by building a dam at Temperance Flat above Friant has been around awhile, too.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Now, Gov. Schwarzenegger proposes nearly \$6 billion in bonds for water that include a large down payment on making Temperance Flat a reality -- if studies conclude the dam makes sense.

But even state Sen. Dave Cogdill, a Republican from Modesto pushing the bond for the governor, predicts that if Temperance Flat is approved it would be 15 or 20 years "before a drop of water is stored."

So why bother, especially in light of the fact the Democratic-controlled Legislature kept money for dams out of the huge infrastructure package approved by voters last year?

Cogdill says climate change and fears of water shortages might cause more people to support building dams again.

Moreover, he says the bond proposal represents a "holistic approach" to water management that also provides money for sustaining the Delta, underground storage and conservation incentives.

Dams are vital, he says, because studies show that as the climate warms, we will receive more rain and less of the slow-melting snowpack that now fills reservoirs. Dams offer both water storage and flood control.

"This is the best opportunity we've had to focus the minds of the voters" on the importance of dams, Cogdill said Monday in a meeting with The Bee's editorial board.

"If we go into a three- or four-year drought, the energy crisis [of 2000-01] will pale in comparison."

Many Democrats, however, say that dams don't deliver enough bang for the dollar. Siding with environmentalists, they prefer underground storage, better management of flood plains and increased conservation as the best ways to deal with climate change and California's continued growth.

Cogdill's challenge is to get the bond proposal out of the Legislature and before the voters on the November 2008 ballot.

Whether that happens likely will hinge on wish-list trading between Democrats and Schwarzenegger.

"It all depends on how important the bill is to the governor," Cogdill says.

At the least, voters should have the opportunity to vote them up or down. Here's hoping they don't go to sleep.  
###

### **Guest Column: From the community: Time running short for Delta *Contra Costa Times* – 3/31/07**

**By Joan Anderson Dym, executive director of the Southern California Water Committee, and Jim Wunderman, president and CEO of the Bay Area Council**

CALIFORNIA HAS A LONG HISTORY of discord over how to best manage the multiple needs of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Delta is the heart of the state's water system, home to a vast array of ecological treasures and a recreational wonderland for anglers and boaters from all over California. The Delta also is in peril, and time is running short.

Standing in a water management center in Sacramento on Tuesday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger re-stated his commitment to take action to overcome the peril, calling for a "Delta Vision" to provide a sustainable management program for the Delta.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Together with the Bay Area Council, the Southern California Water Committee believes that the new approaches of the administration, together with the Legislature, have the potential to produce tangible results.

A good and sustainable public policy decision on what to do about the Delta must include a fair and accurate understanding of stakeholder interests and must, in the end, provide a strong level of accountability for the results to be delivered.

For now, that accountability rests with the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, appointed by the governor in February to develop the vision and the strategic plan to implement it.

And it rests with the governor and the Legislature to provide the leadership and the resources to turn vision into reality.

It started with the governor's Strategic Growth Plan for California when voters approved Proposition 1E to repair levees and improve flood protection throughout the Central Valley, including the Delta.

And it will continue with the second phase of the Strategic Growth Plan, which would allocate nearly \$1 billion toward Delta sustainability.

Both of our organizations have always supported the goals of a reliable water supply, water quality and environmental improvement in any Delta solution.

We think that the solution must be science-based and that technical answers must guide policy.

A core element in the Delta Vision must be a comprehensive program that provides benefits for the environment and fisheries in the Delta ecosystem.

The solution must adequately and appropriately comply with applicable state and federal endangered species protections.

Hurricane Katrina alerted us to the vulnerability of California's Delta levee system to massive flooding.

Multiple levee failures due to floods or earthquakes could easily shut down Delta water exports for months. That loss of water would result in significant supply shortages for 25 million Californians.

The Delta provides 33 percent of San Francisco Bay Area water and 23 percent of San Joaquin Valley water, as well as 30 percent of Southern California's water supply.

Delta water irrigates 45 percent of the fruits and vegetables produced in the United States and helps support California's \$1.6 trillion economy. A loss of water supply from the Delta would result in an economic impact on almost every industry in California, equaling more than \$40 billion per year, and it would result in job losses estimated to exceed 30,000.

The BAC and the SCWC meet regularly and have closely followed the implementation of CalFed as well as earlier Delta efforts.

CalFed has given us a much better scientific understanding of the Delta and funded many improvements to the state's overall water supply.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Nevertheless, it is clear to us that the Delta remains in peril, and the science points to an ever-increasing risk of catastrophic failure from earthquakes, climate change and urbanization.

The stakes are high and time is increasingly short. Delta Vision will succeed only if we can put aside entrenched positions and political partisanship, bring creative thinking to bear and are willing to discuss all options.

Both the SCWC and the BAC believe that the best solution will be the one that produces cost-effective and sustainable long-term positive results.

We recognize that we are dealing with highly complex technical issues with many variables. That said, while we do not seek to dictate a particular solution, we do applaud the governor's persistent calls for action and demand that the Delta Vision produce a timely and adequate response to address the ongoing risks existing in the Delta.

Californians, both north and south, cannot afford anything less. ###

**Guest Opinion: Solution is better levees, not building moratorium**  
***Sacramento Bee* – 4/1/07**

**By Wes Keusder, 2007 chairman of the California Building Industry Association**

We're all wiser now about flood risk in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, but it's time to stop using the disaster as a guise for promoting limits on growth in areas like Sacramento, where Californians want to live, work and play.

The issue is public safety -- everyone's -- so just saying, "No more housing," as the column says, won't fix levees or improve flood protection. Flooding at any depth is undesirable but with housing in such high demand in the region, fixing levees and making it safe to build new homes should be the objective.

In the aftermath of natural disasters such as the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes, most Californians ignored calls for limits and instead insisted that freeways be fixed and homes be rebuilt. San Francisco would be no more than pastureland today had the "let's-give-up" attitude prevailed following the devastating earthquake and fires of 1906. What San Franciscans said then has been the typical response of Americans throughout history to catastrophes of all kinds, including natural disasters:

"Let's rebuild."

California has used ingenuity, technology and a sense of public interest to meet challenges created by its geography, seismology and climate. As a result, California has more durable roadways and safer buildings. This kind of can-do attitude has been at work in California for decades -- building a transcontinental railroad, a bridge over the state's Golden Gate and 1,600 miles of levees, which allowed the city of Sacramento and other Central Valley communities to flourish.

Demonizing homebuilders to support the let's-give-up attitude about flood risk and growth in the region is unfortunate. From San Joaquin County to Yuba County, homebuilders and their local partners have built new levees that are stronger and far more technologically advanced than their predecessors, and will protect tens of thousands of people from flooding. Recently, homebuilders proposed to the Legislature a concept for more systematically accomplishing the same type of flood protection along California's major waterways.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Making suburban homes and urban homes safe from floodwaters is not only possible, it should be the focus of any discussions on flood protections. Simply imposing new and unnecessary building moratoria will only serve to exacerbate the state's housing shortage and is counter to the spirit of California. Responsible policies are possible if California has the will and desire to meet its flood-risk challenges and solve its housing problems.

*Wes Keusder, 2007 chairman of the California Building Industry Association, is responding to the Stuart Leavenworth's March 2 column "Time to restrict building in the deepest floodplains." ###*

### **Column: Canal still best Delta water fix**

**Sacramento Bee – 4/2/073**

**By Dan Walters, Bee columnist**

Jerry Brown's eight-year governorship was an eclectic, often inconsistent mélange of pronouncements and actions, some of which were far-seeing -- alternative energy, for instance -- and some short-sighted and injurious, such as misreading population growth trends and virtually shutting down highway construction as unneeded.

One of Brown's better initiatives was closing a gap in the water system that had been started under his father, Pat Brown, and is the chief source of water for two-thirds of Californians. Water is captured by a dam on the Feather River at Oroville and carried to the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California via the California Aqueduct, fed by pumps at the south end of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta near Tracy.

Pumping water out of the Delta, the younger Brown recognized, was injurious to the huge estuary's marine life by interfering with and even reversing natural flows. Therefore, he and his water director, Ron Robie, wanted to isolate the delicate ecosystem from the water transfer system by building a 44-mile-long, sloughlike channel to carry water around the Delta to the aqueduct.

Initially, the "Peripheral Canal" enjoyed support from both environmentalists and municipal and agricultural water agencies, but by the time the young governor had squeezed it through the Legislature, the comity had evaporated.

Southern California water agencies remained supportive, but large farmers turned against it, saying it had too many environmental restrictions that would limit water deliveries. Environmental groups turned sour, saying that the canal would make it too easy to increase water exports from Northern California. Delta landowners also opposed it, aware that building the Peripheral Canal would remove the rationale for state and federal governments to shore up their deteriorating levees.

Although the opponents came at the Peripheral Canal from conflicting standpoints, they joined forces on a referendum. After a highly misleading, farmer-financed campaign, voters rejected the Peripheral Canal in 1982.

Water policy has been largely frozen ever since voters issued that ill-informed decree. Billions of dollars have been squandered on schemes to improve both the Delta and water deliveries, but the ecosystem has continued to deteriorate, with declining runs of major fish species. And late last month, an Alameda County judge, acting at the behest of sport-fishing advocates, ordered the state to turn off its pumps unless it devises a way to protect fish from being sucked into their blades or obtains a permit to kill them.

Had the Peripheral Canal been built as Jerry Brown urged, the fish being chewed up in the pumps would have been alive and more numerous. Had the Peripheral Canal been built, we wouldn't have to worry so much about Delta levees collapsing due to an earthquake or being breached by rising ocean levels from global warming, either of which would threaten water deliveries.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

But the canal wasn't built.

Arnold Schwarzenegger is the first governor since Brown to truly confront the water policy gridlock. While he hasn't declared support for the Peripheral Canal, his Department of Water Resources has identified it as a potential option.

Schwarzenegger described the fish-kill decision as "one more indication of how our system doesn't really work, and that we have to upgrade it. We have to fix our levees. There are a lot of things that need to be done. We need to have more above-the-ground water storage. We have to start thinking about our Delta; it's very, very vulnerable. As I said, one earthquake and one big storm, and it could wipe out this whole system, and 25 million people will suffer because of it."

He's right. #

**Editorial: Don't take the delta for granted; A recent court ruling should serve as a reminder of the fragility of California's water supply**

***Los Angeles Times* – 4/2/07**

WATER SHOULDN'T be taken for granted in California, a state where billions of gallons are conveyed over thousands of miles to millions of customers. And yet it is. Turn a faucet and, abracadabra, the stuff flows. Most of us don't know where it comes from, how it gets here or where it's stored. Politicians often ignore it too, preferring to focus on (what seem like) more pressing crises.

But a recent ruling by the Alameda County Superior Court is a reminder that this shouldn't be the case. The decision says that California's State Water Project, which moves water through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to other parts of the state, is in violation of the Endangered Species Act because its enormous pumps kill endangered fish. The judge gave the state 60 days to get a waiver or he will shut the pumps down.

That probably won't happen. But make no mistake: The state's water system is in trouble.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta provides water for 25 million Californians — including 60% of Southern California's supply — and supports \$400 billion of economic activity, including fishing and farming. And demands on it will only grow. California's population is expected to jump 30% in the next 20 years, while global warming could reduce the state's snowpack (and the water flows it creates) by the end of the century.

Even without these challenges, the delta faces problems. Like New Orleans, it's protected by old earthen levees — one major earthquake away from crumbling to bits. Also, it is home to rare native species, such as the fish in the Alameda County lawsuit, which support its fragile ecosystem. So the pumping system is vulnerable to environmental litigation.

State officials have known about the delta's weaknesses for decades, and they have talked about various ways to mitigate damage to the delta or to bypass it altogether. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger was in Los Angeles on Friday to promote a \$6-billion water bond that will include \$1 billion for improvements to the delta.

With the governor in his second term, and politicians worried about Hurricane Katrina-like doomsday scenarios, the time is ripe for action. Not-so-subtle nudges like last week's ruling could provide a push to officials who need to get serious about managing the delta. And it could remind the rest of us that the water in our faucets is at the end of a very long and costly journey.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **Editorial: California's complicated water balancing act**

***Fremont Argus – 3/31/07***

IN less than 60 days, the spigot will be turned off on California's largest water delivery system unless the Department of Water Resources acts fast. And, based on what we've seen so far, water service to millions is in jeopardy.

State officials, of all things, failed to obtain a state permit to kill threatened or endangered salmon and Delta smelt. They have a federal permit that allows massive pumps to supply water to more than 23 million people in Alameda County, Silicon Valley and Southern California despite the fact that endangered fish are sucked into the pumps and killed. In this case, however, a federal permit is not good enough.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch recently ruled that DWR violated the California Endangered Species Act and could've turned off the pumps right on the spot. Instead, he gave state officials 60 days from March 23 to rectify the situation, but not surprising, officials claim they need more time.

It's not like they were blindsided by this. Back in 2005, acting on a report by this newspaper, a state Senate committee learned that state water officials failed to obtain a permit to operate pumps just when the Delta's ecosystem crisis was becoming apparent. Instead of working toward meeting the guidelines to gain a permit, state officials relied on flimsy agreements that "allowed them" to continue pumping. That didn't hold water in court and now the situation looks grim.

Balancing California's agricultural, human and wildlife demands for water is a delicate act, and it's getting more difficult as the population grows, but state officials were shortsighted in this case. Officials say there's enough backup water supplies to get through the summer, although one look at the lack of rainfall and a smaller-than-normal Sierra snowpack suggests otherwise.

Nevertheless, what about beyond? Officials are turning to Fish and Game for possible solutions, such as issuing a temporary permit to keep these pumps going, but let's get to the bottom line here. This situation tells us California's water policy is endangered.

The pumps crisis needs to be addressed immediately. We have to do what is necessary to keep the spigot open in the short term and the state must find long-term remedies to our growing demands for water without severely endangering wildlife.

We urge state officials to form a plan to deliver water and qualify the pumps under state law. If they can at least bring a plan to the table, there's a chance the 60-day deadline could be extended. If we take this approach, find innovative ideas instead of excuses, we can deliver water to millions while striving to preserve vulnerable species. That's the way it should be. ###

### **Editorial: It's time to follow the law**

***Stockton Record – 3/30/07***

What should you do if the state passes a law you don't like?

- » Ignore it.
- » Make excuses.
- » Hope nobody enforces it.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Administrators of the California Department of Water Resources, which operates the 11 pumps that send Delta water south near Tracy, have done all three.

That changed on March 23, when an Alameda County judge released a ruling saying the state agency was violating the law and would have to shut down the pumps within 60 days if a long-neglected permit to kill threatened fish wasn't obtained.

That's impossible in the time frame given, maybe impossible altogether.

Department of Water Resources officials haven't obtained the permit - despite claiming they would as far back as 2005 - because the application would force a closer examination of environmental degradation in the Delta.

The pumps kill fish. Three species are in need of protection.

It's almost too late to save the Delta smelt. There once were an estimated 800,000 of them. There are about 35,000 today. More than the survival of aquatic species is at stake.

An estimated 22 million Southern Californians rely on the water being pumped through the Delta. If the pumps stop for a long period, major problems would ensue.

Still, that doesn't justify disregarding the law.

State Sen. Michael Machado, D-Linden, is concerned the Delta smelt might disappear before the dispute is resolved.

"You can start and stop pumps. But extinction is forever," Machado said.

Officials at the Department of Water Resources - because of fear and a misplaced sense of their own importance - have violated the public trust.

Now they're going to have to come up with a solution that follows state law, whether they like it or not. ###

### **Editorial: As We See It: New supply of water needed**

#### **Santa Cruz Sentinel – 4/1/07**

In 1976, the first of back-to-back drought years settled over Santa Cruz, and the city Water Department responded with a major effort to conserve water.

It was then that residents of Santa Cruz learned about low-flow showers and bricks in toilets and drought-resistant gardens. By 1977, when the second year of the drought arrived, residents here had cut back on their water use significantly — and the city managed to hold on until the rains finally returned in 1978.

Santa Cruz suffered from more drought in the early 1990s, although in those years there was enough rain that major rationing was largely averted.

Now it's 2007, and another dry year has affected the city. But things are different. Water conservation has become standard practice. New construction as well as retrofitting has resulted in toilets that use less than half the water. Some urinals use either no water at all or a minuscule amount.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Santa Cruzans year in and year out do a remarkable job of conserving water. It's a new ethic when it comes to preserving natural resources.

Alas, what hasn't happened during the last three decades is the development of any new water sources. That failing affects the city of Santa Cruz more than outlying water districts, because the city relies on surface water. Other districts use groundwater, which has its own limitations, but also is a bit more reliable during a drought.

City Water Director Bill Kocher estimates that Loch Lomond Reservoir — the source for much of the city's summer water — will be less than half filled by the time summer ends. Another dry year next year could put the supply at a dangerous level.

True, the city will go through a series of water-conservation moves. In fact, it already has. Last week, the city announced mandatory cutbacks effective May 1, including a ban on watering outdoor gardens during the day. Also limited will be the washing of cars, at least from a hose at a private home.

The city serves not only those within the city limits, but also an additional 35,000 people who live outside the city limits.

The lesson from this is the need to develop a new water source. Even with conservation, more supply will be needed. The city currently is testing a desalination project, one that could result in an emergency supply of water for drought years. For example, in the event of a low-rainfall season, the desalination project could supplement the supply with treated seawater.

We hope that elected leaders will see the need to proceed on finding more water. It's their responsibility to see that basic services are provided to their customers.

We also recommend that water officials look toward new technology, including one proposed program that involves treating water far out in the bay and then bringing in a supplemental supply for delivery.

There are new technologies. In fact, emerging technologies have already improved conservation methods. But conservation has gone as far as it can go.

It's time to discover new supplies, and new ways of providing those supplies to an area that could run short, especially during a drought. ###

### **Editorial: Water wisdom; Next grounds for conservation: lawns** ***San Diego Union Tribune – 3/31/07***

Providing residents a break on replacing old toilets with new, water-saving toilets was a smart move by the San Diego County Water Authority. Its voucher program has saved 102 billion gallons over the past 15 years. In that same period, it has saved property owners who bought upgraded johns with the authority's investment in \$38,894,000 worth of cost-saving vouchers.

With 518,600 household toilets replaced, and low-water toilets ensconced in building codes, the water savings from the voucher program have declined. Expected to save 23,616 acre-feet a year, replacements now produce only about 18,000. If the toilets are here to stay, the voucher program for individual homeowners is not. The authority is limiting it to multifamily residential and commercial users, enough to make up the missing 5,000 acre-feet a year.

The authority's larger goal, however, is saving 100,000 acre-feet a year. After low-water toilets, the biggest source of water savings is where half of the residential water use goes: landscaping. So the

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

authority has turned its investment in upgrading toilets to persuading homeowners to trade inefficient for efficient irrigation, thirsty plants for drought survivors and, ultimately, grass for a low-water lawn. These measures save 20, 40, 60 gallons a day with commensurate reductions (as much as 33 percent) in consumers' water bills.

The authority already offers free controllers smart enough to turn off the sprinklers when it rains. It offers classes to train and certify landscapers as low-water experts. It plans to work with businesses to develop ever more efficient watering systems – with grants and rebates attached.

After the age of 2 or 3, people demand toilets. That won't change. Getting them used to low-water landscaping offers appreciable, long-term conservation. ###

### For the week of April 9-13, 2007

#### DELTA ISSUES:

##### **New Delta water plan sought; Court ruling on Tracy pumps spawns legislation**

***Capital Press* – 4/10/07**

**By Bob Krauter, Editor**

SACRAMENTO - Prompted by a court-ordered shut down of the state's water pumps near Tracy, two state lawmakers have entered the debate on managing fresh water supplies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the centerpiece of California's plumbing system.

State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, has authored Senate Bill 27, which sets a deadline of Jan. 1 2008, for the state Department of Water Resources to pick the best of five options for moving water through the Delta.

The options are featured in a report by the Public Policy Institute of California. They range from an aqueduct to transfer water through the Delta to other options, which include curtailed pumping and new dams.

The legislation comes on the heels of an Alameda County Superior Court ruling last month that the state water agency must shut down massive pumps near Tracy, which pull water from the Delta into the California Aqueduct. The 444-mile aqueduct serves more than two-thirds of all Californians and thousands of acres of farmland. The court ruling found that the state had failed to obtain a permit under the state Endangered Species Act to kill protected salmon and Delta smelt at the pumps.

This week, State Department of Water Resources Director Lester Snow has asked the Department of Fish and Game to rule on whether the operations of the Delta pumps adhere to the federal Endangered Species Act. Snow contends that existing agreements with Fish and Game conform to state law on fish protections.

Terry Erlewine, general manager of the State Water Contractors, a Sacramento group that represents major urban and agricultural water agencies, takes the threat of a pump shut down seriously.

"It is a big share of the supply for many of our districts. If you look at an 18-month outage, it has a huge potential impact," Erlewine said. "We are taking it very seriously and looking at what could happen."

Erlewine's first impression of SB 27 as a Delta fix is positive.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"From what I can see of the legislation, I am not sure that it may not be a positive thing. On the face of it, it is pretty appropriate and actually it looks very good," he said. "We are frustrated too that the CalFed program looked at this and had a chance to make these decisions eight years ago and if they had done the right thing back then, we wouldn't be in this situation."

CalFed, the California and Federal Bay-Delta Program, a combined federal and state effort that started in 1994, was supposed to have resolved issues relating to water supply and the region's ecology. Erlewine said it failed to live up to expectations after more than a decade of work.

Simitian's bill is co-authored by State Sen. Mike Machado, D-Linden. Machado supports moving water through existing Delta channels as opposed to a peripheral canal or aqueduct that Simitian proposed in legislation last year. Erlewine is skeptical about using natural waterways to transfer water as that option could sharply reduce water to agricultural and urban users. He thinks building a peripheral canal, an idea that California voters rejected in 1982, deserves serious consideration now.

"We are interested in seeing that evaluation straight up, seeing what that shows and looking at the choices there and seeing what happens," he said. "Let's just make a decision here. Let's not keep trying to paper over all of these differences of opinion. We have some serious issues here and let's try to resolve this."

Mike Wade, executive director of the California Farm Water Coalition, said it appeared the Legislature was proposing what it should have done years ago. While he hoped progress can be made on a Delta water fix, SB 27 may surface deep divisions about how to address myriad issues. Environmental groups will oppose building new dams even though they can effectively address flood control, water supply and climate change concerns, Wade said. On the other side are groups who will staunchly oppose a peripheral canal.

"How do you make any progress in the state? If you had that kind of approach in 1930, California would not look like it does today and we wouldn't be the economic force that we are and we wouldn't have the agriculture industry that we have," Wade said. "We need to plan for the future and not limp along and put band aids on things. That's how we got where we are with the Delta."

If a resolution to the court decision on the Delta pumps doesn't come soon, Terry Erlewine said a shut down of pumps at the Harvey O. Banks plant will inflict pain on farmers and urban water users.

"There are major urban contractors in Fremont and Pleasanton and the Santa Clara Valley. The whole Silicon Valley --- those are the ones who are most significantly affected by any shutdown if this actually goes through," he said.

In all, 29 urban and agricultural water agencies have claim to about 4 million acre-feet of water annually from the State Water Project through long-term contracts. About 70 percent of state water is devoted to urban uses and about 30 percent to agriculture.

### **Smelt not officially endangered; But Fish and Game decision may be reversed** ***Stockton Record* – 4/13/07**

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

State Department of Fish and Game commissioners denied an emergency request Thursday to upgrade the status of the Delta smelt from threatened to endangered.

But it might be just a delay in the inevitable.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Fish and Game spokesman Steve Martarano said his agency will present commissioners next month with a report that supports listing the fish as endangered. That heartened conservation groups that requested the new listing earlier this year and tried to quicken the process by seeking the emergency declaration.

"This is serious," said Jeff Miller, a spokesman for the Center for Biological Diversity in San Francisco. "We're about to lose our first native Delta fish species on our watch."

The smelt already is considered threatened under the California Endangered Species Act. Elevating the fish to endangered could increase the amount of funding and research toward its survival, Miller said.

A petition filed by conservation groups earlier this year said there might have been as many as 800,000 adult smelt in the Delta in the 1960s and '70s. The population dropped about 80 percent in the 1980s and declined again in recent years.

When the petition was filed, there might have been about 35,000 smelt, the conservationists said, claiming the fish is in "imminent" danger of extinction.

While it's not a sport fish and has no commercial value, the smelt's decline is considered a sign the entire Delta is foundering. Two-thirds of Californians get at least some of their drinking water from the estuary.

Conservationists point to large export pumps near Tracy as a primary cause of the smelt's decline. State water managers, however, say there are other problems, such as competition from non-native species.

Conservationists also are seeking greater smelt protection from the federal government. A petition to upgrade smelt from threatened to endangered on the federal Endangered Species List is pending, Miller said. ###

### **Water officials: Judge's ruling went overboard; Without permits, Delta pump shutdown looms** **Stockton Record – 4/12/07**

**By Alex Breitler, staff writer**

A judge overstepped his authority by ordering giant Delta pumps near Tracy shut down if the state cannot get proper permits to kill fish, water managers argued Wednesday.

The Department of Water Resources filed its official response to a March 22 court ruling that, when finalized, could reduce water supplies for 25 million people from Livermore to Los Angeles.

In a series of three dozen objections, the state reasserted its claim that older agreements allow it to kill threatened Delta smelt and salmon at the Banks Pumping Plant, even without an official permit under state law.

What is more, Judge Frank Roesch's ruling assumes that any operation of the pumping plant will "take" fish, while state water managers argue that is not the case during certain times of year.

Department of Water Resources Director Lester Snow in a statement said Wednesday's court filing underscores a long-term strategy to restore the Delta while ensuring future water supplies.

Stockton environmentalist Bill Jennings, whose California Sportfishing Protection Alliance brought the lawsuit that culminated with Roesch's ruling, said the state was "refrying the egg."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"They're trying to reopen the case," Jennings said. "The judge provided a brief period of time to comment on the proposed order, not to reargue the entire case."

Among its objections, the state said the word "massive" used by the judge to describe the amount of water shipped south is inaccurate and subject to misinterpretation. And a reference to "significant" numbers of fish killed at the pumps is ambiguous and ignores the state's attempts to save fish and replace those that are killed.

Snow's solution presented Monday was to ask the state Department of Fish and Game to determine that the pumps comply with state law, based on federal biological opinions. This "consistency determination" would be the quickest way to obey the judge's order, he said.

Fish and Game has 30 days to make that determination. The 60-day pump shutdown clock, meanwhile, would begin ticking when Roesch issues his final ruling, Jennings said.

Earlier this week state Sen. Michael Machado, D-Linden, asked Snow and Fish and Game Director Ryan Broddrick whether it was wise to continue to operate the pumps given the catastrophic crash in Delta smelt populations. Machado said that until scientists determine what is killing them, running the pumps could reduce fish stocks beyond the point of no return.

"Extinction is forever," Machado said.

Snow said that is a possibility but stressed that the smelt face a variety of enemies other than the pumps: salt levels in the water, competition from invasive species and water quality to name just three.

Given this, Snow warned against the urge to shut down the pumps.

"Turning that knob and having economic consequences doesn't assure the recovery of the Delta smelt," he said.

Committee Chairman Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, asked the officials why they chose to ask for a consistency determination rather than go through the normal process. Broddrick said this way is far faster and will in effect mirror the rules the federal government relies on to operate its own set of giant water pumps in the area.

Machado said that state law could be more stringent and require full mitigation of any damage done to the fish by the state pumps. Broddrick said whatever they did would comply with state law.

Steinberg wanted to know why the state would rely on the federal rules. He asked Broddrick if those rules were in dispute.

"They certainly are," Broddrick said, referring to an active lawsuit similar to the one that threatens the state pumps.

"So how do we reconcile that one?" Steinberg asked.

They cannot, Broddrick acknowledged. Essentially, the state is playing double-or-nothing: If the federal lawsuit invalidates the rules governing the federal pumps, and the state's "consistency determination" relies on those federal rules, then the courts could shut down both sets of pumps. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

**Farm-friendly dams in danger; Both the seasonal rock barriers and the water pumps in the Delta are suspected of killing fish and are at risk of being cut**

***Contra Costa Times* - 4/11/07**

**By Mike Taugher, staff writer**

The resurgent clash between California's big water users and the Delta ecosystem is pinching farmers such as Joey Ratto.

A gregarious fourth-generation farmer, Ratto grows tomatoes, asparagus and other crops just upstream from pumps that deliver water to Southern California, the San Joaquin Valley and parts of the Bay Area.

Those pumps are strong enough to draw down the water in south Delta rivers, leaving smaller pumps owned by Ratto and others to suck sand.

To allow south Delta farmers to irrigate, state water officials each year install temporary rock dams that trap incoming tides and raise the water level. It is an annual exercise that costs more than \$5 million, paid for by big water users throughout California.

But this year, with the fate of endangered Delta fish the subject of increasing alarm, regulators decided to delay those dams until June. The dams, it turns out, also trap fish.

It was the kind of decision that sends shudders down the spine of anyone whose livelihood depends on irrigation.

"If they don't put those dams in, I'm in serious trouble," Ratto said as the sun shone brightly on fields of grain and a long stretch of Middle River that looked more like a damp sand wash.

California's water system is fraying. The aquatic ecosystem in the Delta, the state's most important source of water, has badly deteriorated in recent years. Its levees are increasingly fragile. A judge recently ruled that the state is not operating its pumps in compliance with the California Endangered Species Act and threatened to shut off water pumps upon which 25 million people rely. And state officials have no clear plan to fix the problems.

This year, however, the farmers got a reprieve. In late March, regulators reversed their position on the dams, saying the Delta smelt they were trying to protect appear to be almost entirely in the northern Delta, where the dams pose no threat. The barriers now are expected by the end of the month.

But in a dry spring, the Delta farmers are left to wonder what happens if the fish move south in the coming weeks, as well as what happens next year.

"That's the million-dollar question," said John Herrick, a lawyer for the south Delta farmers.

In the big picture, the tough decisions tend to favor big water users or endangered fish, not farmers such as Ratto.

"It's always touch-and-go every springtime," said Kathy Kelly, the state Department of Water Resources Bay-Delta branch chief. "This being a dry year, it's coming into play even more."

Ratto's predicament is not unique. Herrick estimated that the low water brought on by the big state and federal pumps affects more than 100 farms.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Moreover, the future for farmers here is bleak.

Some experts say the farmers will be the big losers if the state ever sorts out a sustainable plan for the Delta. Among the reasons: The farms depend on fragile levees to deliver water and much of their land continues to subside, increasing the pressure on those levees.

A comprehensive plan for the Delta could very well reduce the state's reliance on, and therefore public funding for, levee maintenance.

During low tide one day last week, Ratto showed a visitor one of his pumps on Middle River. Much of the river bed was exposed, and although the pump's intake was in a shallow pool several hundred yards long, it was clear there was not enough water there to irrigate a large field.

"I think it would empty it pretty fast, 15 minutes max," Ratto said.

A few moments later, Ratto's cell phone rang. It was a neighbor who told Ratto he had just shut off two pumps to vineyards because of a lack of water.

The drying Middle River is not yet a big problem for Ratto.

"If we had hot weather right now, this would be 100 times worse," said Herrick, who had threatened to sue shortly before regulators decided to reverse course on installing the temporary dams.

At the time of Herrick's threat, biologists already were reconsidering the dams in relation to the north Delta fish.

But with the overall Delta smelt population severely depressed, they had a lingering concern that the dams would trap fish.

To Herrick, the problem is not the decision to protect fish.

The problem, he said, is the big pumps.

His threat to sue the state amounted to this: Either install the dams or slow down the pumps. If you leave the dams out, then you cannot pump the Delta farmers out of existence.

His clients have water rights that in many cases are far superior, if smaller, than the big water projects.

But the Delta farmers figure it is unlikely they will ever gain water at the expense of bigger water users. That means the best way to secure a reliable source of water is a healthy ecosystem.

"Our short- and long-term solutions are things like Delta smelt recovery," Herrick said. ###

### **Senate panel OKs flood safety, water package; One bill is designed to balance urban needs with Delta ecosystem**

***Sacramento Bee* – 4/11/07**

**By Judy Lin, staff writer**

A number of flood safety and Delta management bills cleared initial legislative hurdles Tuesday as lawmakers sought to balance Mother Nature and humans' thirst for water.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on Tuesday passed a bill that sets a deadline for choosing the best way to transport water around the state.

Senate Bill 27 seeks to balance the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's ecosystem with the needs of the state's growing population by directing the state Department of Water Resources to choose from five options for channeling drinking water to urban parts of the state by 2008.

Sen. Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica, described the bill as providing necessary "adult supervision" after decades of fighting among various interests over how best to maintain the fresh water system.

"I'm hopeful that this time we're going to do what we say we're going to do," Kuehl said.

Water Resources Director Lester Snow said the bill replicates a task that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger assigned to a Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force. The task force is expected to present a water management program report to the governor by Jan. 1, 2008.

"Both are looking at the same kind of strategy on the same timeline," Snow said.

During the same committee hearing, senators from both sides of the aisle approved a state flood management bill by Sen. Mike Machado, D-Linden. Senate Bill 5 seeks to define responsibilities of state and local governments, builders, developers and homeowners for meeting flood preparedness standards.

Currently, the state is responsible for maintaining a system of levees, bypasses and weirs. It has been found liable in past lawsuits for flood damage.

Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, called it a logical move for the state to define duties for protecting homes and farmlands.

Two flood safety bills by Assemblywoman Lois Wolk, D-Davis, cleared the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on party-line votes. Assembly Bill 5 would encourage local planners to adopt flood standards by giving them priority for state funding. Assembly Bill 1452 complements the earlier bill by setting funding priorities.

"Homes continue to be built in areas at high risk of flooding," Wolk said in a statement. "Lives and property continue to be put at risk, and every year we fail to act is another year that risk increases." #####

### **Call for action on help for Delta; State senators say preserving estuary should be priority *Stockton Record* – 4/10/07**

**By Hank Shaw, staff writer**

SACRAMENTO - Call it the Détente on the Delta: A bill to explore building a peripheral canal around the Delta has been transformed into a multiyear effort to save the West's largest estuary.

Backed by Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, a trio of influential state senators announced Monday that they think it's time for the Legislature to save the Delta - or take the heat for failure.

Decades have been spent grinding through proposal after scenario after study after analysis of the Delta, but precious little actually has been done to protect the primary source of drinking water for 25million Californians.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

A recent attempt by a coalition of federal, state and local agencies failed. Now Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has told the state Department of Water Resources to fix the problem, and he has created an advisory group to help. It is supposed to release its recommendations in January.

Monday's event signaled the Senate's full-scale entry into the debate. Sens. Michael Machado, D-Linden; Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento; and Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, said that when the administration's proposals emerge, they will do their bit to make them a reality by the end of 2008.

Simitian had sponsored the peripheral canal bill, and Machado had vowed to kill it; Steinberg, who chairs the Natural Resources Committee, was caught between them.

The nascent compromise gelled around a recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California, which outlined five plausible futures for the Delta. Two of those include some form of peripheral canal - an idea that is anathema to those living in the San Joaquin section of the Delta because of fears a canal might suck fresh water from the area and turn it into a stagnant backwater.

Machado, a veteran of more than a decade of water wars, said it is time for all sides to sacrifice a bit for the greater good of the estuary, which has been dying at an alarming rate.

"All of us have to give a little in order to make this situation better," Machado said.

Monday's announcement began what is expected to be a busy week in the water world.

Senate and Assembly committees are scheduled to debate legislation today that would refine the state's flood-control efforts, require local land-use planning to reflect historic flood plains and guide how \$5 billion in recently passed flood-control bond money will be spent.

In addition, Steinberg's Natural Resources Committee is scheduled to hear an update this morning on the lawsuit that threatens to shut down the state water pumps near Tracy. ###

### **Democrats seek balance for delta; LEGISLATORS WEIGH HABITAT, WATER DEMAND**

***Associated Press – 4/10/07***

**By Samantha Young, staff writer**

SACRAMENTO - Democratic lawmakers Monday proposed legislation that would balance the habitat and water supply in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, a fragile ecosystem that provides drinking water to two-thirds of state residents.

The bill highlights five possible strategies, with a mandate that the Legislature end decades of debate and select a fix-it plan for the delta by 2008.

"Let's get to work and pick one," said Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento.

The lawmakers seized upon a set of recycled ideas promoted earlier this year in a report by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Among the potential solutions is piping water around the delta by building a canal. That would guarantee water deliveries to farmers, cities in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area if a levee were to break and seawater rushed in. A 1982 initiative to build such a canal was rejected by voters.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The Democrats' bill is the latest attempt to address problems in a vital estuary that drains more than 40 percent of the state's land mass but is beset by trouble, from disappearing native fish to sinking islands and decade-old levees in need of repair.

Previous attempts to address delta problems have been stymied by the myriad special interests that include cities, farmers, local irrigation districts and environmentalists.

The highest profile attempt of recent years is the California and Federal Bay-Delta Program, a state and federal joint effort started in 1994. Its goal was to end long-running disputes about delta water and restore the region's ecology. But critics of the CalFed program say it has failed to live up to its mission, despite more than a decade of work and \$3 billion.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger weighed in with his own plan earlier this year, appointing a task force to study potential solutions. "All of us have to give a little in order to make the system better," said Sen. Mike Machado, D-Stockton.

The other ideas include a proposal to fortify several levees, creating a channel to send water through the delta, and reducing the amount of exported water.

In a separate action related to delta water, the state Department of Water Resources on Monday sought authorization to operate pumps it uses to send water out of the delta to cities and farms.

The move comes two weeks after an Alameda County Superior Court judge ordered the pumps at the Harvey O. Banks plant to be shut down within 60 days unless the state complies with environmental laws designed to protect endangered fish.

The pumps are crucial for water deliveries throughout California, but also suck in and kill fish species that are threatened or endangered, including the chinook salmon and delta smelt.

State water officials want to avoid the time-consuming process of applying for permits. Instead, they are asking the state Department of Fish and Game to show that the pumping operations comply with the California Endangered Species Act. ###

### **Dems push for Delta action; Proposed bill sets deadline for deciding how to divvy up fresh water statewide**

***Sacramento Bee* – 4/10/07**

**By Judy Lin and Matt Weisser, staff writers**

Amid judicial threats to shut down water pumps to protect endangered fish, Senate Democrats on Monday unveiled legislation that would set a deadline for consensus for how California should maintain its largest source of fresh water -- the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

"The Delta is going to hell in a handbasket," said Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, one of the authors of Senate Bill 27. "There are 23 million Californians who were understandably worried about water quality and water security, which they depend on. And Northern Californians who have traditionally thought of it as 'their water' continue to be anxious about how much of that water would flow to other parts of the state."

SB 27 sets a Jan. 1, 2008, deadline for the state Department of Water Resources to pick one of five options for water transfer put forth by a recent research paper.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The report by the Public Policy Institute of California proposed three versions of an aqueduct for channeling fresh water from the Delta to other parts of the state, and two that call for reducing water pumping and building dams near the Delta.

The bill is being pushed by the Democrat-controlled Senate at the same time as an environmental lawsuit is threatening to disrupt the state's most vital water source.

A March 23 decision by the Alameda Superior Court found that the state failed to obtain a permit under the state Endangered Species Act to kill protected salmon and Delta smelt at its Delta water export pumps near Tracy. The court ordered the state to shut down the pumps in 60 days unless it comes into compliance. Environmentalists say such pumps kill thousands of endangered fish every year.

DWR Director Lester Snow on Monday said his department has asked the state Department of Fish and Game to rule on whether its operations are consistent with the federal Endangered Species Act. Such a "consistency determination," he said, is the fastest way to comply with the court's order. Fish and Game has 30 days to rule on the request.

Meanwhile, senators on Monday described the suit as a "call to action." They said their bill could help solve a decades-old problem facing the state: how to distribute water fairly, particularly between north and south, while protecting the Delta's ecosystem.

Environmental groups commended Democrats for trying to move the discussion forward.

"We hope this bill will require fishery agencies to identify how much water fish need to be healthy," said Jonas Minton, water policy adviser for the Planning and Conservation League. "It would be a multibillion-dollar mistake to build new structures before finding out whether they will help or hurt the problem."

But SB 27 reveals division even among environmentally conscious lawmakers on how best to sustain a massive web of channels stretching 50 miles from Sacramento to Tracy, and 25 miles from Antioch to Stockton.

"Up to now, nobody has been willing to give on either side. It's been either you sacrifice, or I take and you suffer," said co-author Sen. Mike Machado, D-Linden.

Machado, who represents portions of the Central Valley and agricultural interests in the Delta, would like to maintain the current system of channeling water through natural waterways.

Simitian, however, proposed a bill last year to build a peripheral canal, or aqueduct, arguing that the state could charge water users if clean water was sent directly to more densely populated parts of the state, such as Southern California and the Bay Area.

The judge's ruling came in a lawsuit filed by Watershed Enforcers, a branch of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance. Shutting down the pumps has huge economic ramifications for the state. The pumps provide water for domestic consumption to more than 24 million Californians.

Environmental groups are questioning DWR's effort to get federal compliance, noting that this federal authority is a moving target: It is being challenged in a separate lawsuit, and is also being updated by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

To account for this uncertainty, DWR on Monday asked to join the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as an "applicant" in this federal update. It is also developing a habitat conservation plan for the Delta, which would satisfy both the state and federal species acts. However, it can't be completed until 2009 at the earliest.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

DWR has until Wednesday to respond to the court's decision. In a conference call, Snow said the department again will argue that its existing agreements with Fish and Game satisfy state law.

"I want to make a fundamental point of how inappropriate it would be to curtail all pumping in any case, whatever the outcome," Snow said. "We're going to do everything we can to ensure that doesn't happen." ###

### **Long-Term Dredge Plan Charter Complete: Seven state and federal agencies sign agreement USACE Press Release**

**April 5, 2007**

**SAN FRANCISCO** - Seven state and federal agencies have signed a charter to develop and implement a long-term plan for managing dredge material that will ultimately help restore the ecological health and improve water management of the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast.

The Delta Long-Term Management Strategy (LTMS) details both near- and long-term research and planning activities for dredging and beneficial reuse in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. It was developed in 2004 by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers along the same lines as a successful dredging and sediment management approach for the San Francisco Bay.

Near-term activities of Delta LTMS will address topics such as immediate research needs associated with dredge material disposal and reuse, while long-term activities will focus on developing a comprehensive dredge material management plan for the Delta.

All seven agencies that signed the LTMS charter are engaged in implementing the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. They are: the Corps, California Bay-Delta Authority, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, the Delta Protection Commission and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Delta LTMS will explore ways to coordinate and manage dredging planning, regulatory approval and implementation to protect and enhance the Delta's ecosystem, water quality, navigation and flood control functions. The goals of LTMS are to manage dredging activities to achieve the following:

- Support and maintain Delta channels for navigation, flood control, water conveyance and recreation,
- Maintain and stabilize Delta levees that protect land-based activities, water conveyance and terrestrial ecosystems, and
- Protect and enhance water quality for Delta water supply and ecosystem function.

The Delta plays a major role in the state's prosperity by providing at least a portion of the drinking water for 24 million Californians statewide, fueling a \$31 billion agricultural industry and serving as an important habitat for 750 animal and plant species, including waterfowl, birds of prey, sport fish and species listed as threatened or endangered such as Delta smelt, Chinook salmon and steelhead.

The 1,000-square-mile Delta estuary supports 80 percent of California's commercial salmon fisheries and its 1,100 miles of levees protect farms, cities, schools and people.

For more information on the Delta Long-Term Management Strategy please visit [www.deltaltms.com](http://www.deltaltms.com).

### **Farmers in Delta running short on water**

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### ***Stockton Record – 4/7/07***

**By Reed Fujii, staff writer**

UNION ISLAND - Spring arrived just a couple of weeks ago, but farmers on Union and Roberts islands in the south San Joaquin Delta say their water supplies already are running out.

With low water flows and the giant federal and state water systems sucking water out of other areas of the Delta to ship to cities and farms farther south, some irrigation pumps along the south end of Middle River can only run three to four hours a day. And area growers fear the problem will only get worse this summer when natural flows diminish further and irrigation demands grow.

Government officials said temporary in-stream barriers should help address the problem, but won't be completed until later this month.

In the meantime, however, farmers will have to cope.

"Guys are having problems," said Dino Del Carlo. "Like myself, when it's low tide, we don't have any water to pump anymore.

"We're going to start planting tomatoes next week and you're really going to have a big problem if you run out of water to irrigate those things," said Del Carlo, who also cultivates alfalfa, asparagus and grain crops in the area.

Standing on the Undine Road Bridge over Middle River this week, farmer Bill Salmon pointed to the muddy river bed exposed to the sun at low tide.

"We used to be concerned about the quality. Right now the quality has become secondary. All we want is something wet," said Salmon, who grows winegrapes, walnuts and field crops in the area.

His own irrigation operations must be put on hold four to five hours a day and it's even worse for others. Salmon said his son, who raises grapes along another stretch of the river, can irrigate for only three to four hours per day.

John Herrick, a Stockton attorney who represents the South Delta Water Agency, acknowledged that a relatively dry winter and low river flows may be contributing to the problem.

However, he blamed pumps feeding the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project for pulling down water levels throughout the south Delta. Middle River's bed lies below sea level and would have water in it, save for the massive water exports.

"Every year we have things like this," Herrick said. "This is common and it adversely affects every diverter who pulls water out."

The California Department of Water Resources is now constructing three in-stream barriers that help maintain south Delta water levels sufficient for irrigation, a state official said.

One is due for completion early next week and the other two should be done by April 22, said Mark Holderman, chief of DWR's temporary barriers program.

"The combination of those barriers helps boost water levels in the south Delta and that should help the farmers," he said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"The problem is we have permits that don't allow us to get started on them until the first of April, so we can't get them in any sooner," Holderman said. "Normally that isn't a problem, but this has been a pretty dry year and so the farmers are wanting to irrigate now."

That should be good news for Joe Ratto, a farmer whose pump near the Undine Road Bridge filled an irrigation ditch with sand, instead of water, as the Middle River ran dry. He was anxious about plans to begin planting processing tomatoes later this month. Having contracted to supply tomatoes to a cannery and already ordered seedling tomatoes to transplant, Ratto is committed to planting.

"If they put the barriers in, we should have water," he said. "I don't know about quality, but we'll have water."

Herrick also pointed a finger at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operates the CVP water exports, saying the agency recently increased its pumping rate despite low-water conditions in the Delta.

"The bureau doesn't care," he said.

The agency is concerned about potential negative impacts from its operations, spokesman Jeff McCracken countered.

"We certainly don't like to see other people impacted by our operations. That's what the barriers are for," he said. "Hopefully these folks can get through the next week or so until the state can get those barriers in place and so everybody can get on doing what they been doing for the last 60 years."

He acknowledged the bureau had recently increased its Delta water exports to about 3,500 cubic feet per second (about 26,189 gallons per second).

That amount, however, still fails to meet demands of CVP water users and the bureau is currently drawing water from San Luis Reservoir to make up the difference, he said. The federal pumps also remain below full capacity of 4,600 cubic feet per second (35,880 gallons per second).

That's the rate the agency normally runs in the spring. When California gets a good wet winter, McCracken said, "We're going full blast trying to fill up San Luis Reservoir." ###

## CLIMATE CHANGE:

### **Schwarzenegger urges faster action on climate change**

***San Diego Union Tribune – 4/11/07***

**By Dana Wilkie, staff writer**

WASHINGTON – In a speech coinciding with his appearance in a Newsweek cover story on global warming, Gov. Schwarzenegger on Wednesday told an audience of college students that those who refuse to address climate change are "fanatics."

Buoyed by new polls showing his popularity has rebounded, and by international attention as the cover man on this week's Newsweek and this month's Fortune magazines, California's Republican governor appeared to be addressing those he thinks have been too slow to counter the manmade components of global warming. Schwarzenegger, who has been at odds with the Bush administration over how aggressively to address climate change, said mainstream scientists, company CEOs and a majority of Americans are convinced "global warming and climate change is real and that we have to do something about it."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"So who are the fanatics now?" he asked during his address at Georgetown University's Gaston Hall, which was packed with young adults who twice gave him standing ovations. "They are the ones who are in denial."

The governor never specified whom he meant by "they." Instead, he likened the movement to combat global warming as one gaining the sort of mainstream acceptance now enjoyed by body-building, a pastime he said was once dominated by people – such as himself – who were considered gym fanatics.

"Environmentalists were no fun," said Schwarzenegger, whose speech was part of a Newsweek-sponsored "Global Environment Leadership Conference."

"They were like prohibitionists at the fraternity party. We have to make it mainstream, we have to make it sexy, we have to make it attractive so everyone wants to participate," he said.

On the stage beside the governor, perched atop an easel, was a blowup of the latest issue of Newsweek, which features a suit-clad Schwarzenegger twirling a globe atop his finger, with the headline: "Save the Planet – Or Else."

The cover story reports that the governor "is peddling feel-good, consumer-friendly environmentalism that resonates not only with the fluorescent-light-bulb-worshiping hybrid drivers, but also with big business and those who think 'green' is a synonym for 'Chicken Little.' His faith in the power of technology and free markets to slow global warming is neither depressing nor polarizing."

Schwarzenegger's remarks came as the Field Poll released a new survey showing California voters see global warming as a serious problem. The random survey of 523 registered voters, conducted late last month, found that eight of 10 California voters describe global warming as a very serious (56 percent) or somewhat serious (25 percent) problem. Just one in five California voters approve of the job the federal government is doing to address the global warming problem, while more than three times as many, or 66 percent, disapprove.

Voters are less critical of state government. The survey found that 43 percent approve of the state's efforts to address global warming, while another 43 percent disapprove.

The Field Poll also reported last week that the governor's standing among the state's voters has rebounded to nearly its peak level of his first year in office.

Last year Schwarzenegger and the state legislature passed a first-in-the-nation law requiring that California reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases – the heat-trapping gases blamed for global warming – by 25 percent by the year 2020. Earlier this year, Schwarzenegger used his executive powers to require a 10 percent reduction in the carbon content of all transportation fuels by 2020. And last month, the governor sought to shape national policy on global warming when he and four other Western governors signed a collective strategy to curtail greenhouse gas emission from Santa Fe to Seattle.

Some congressional Democrats – including California Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer – want to use last year's law as a model for national legislation. Before signing the state bill, however, Schwarzenegger first tried to water it down to appease business interests.

The governor's fight against global warming has earned him some criticism. Michigan's automakers accuse him of costing their industry \$85 billion nationally, and a billboard in the state reads: "Arnold to Michigan: Drop Dead."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Said Schwarzenegger to Georgetown students Wednesday: "What I'm saying to Michigan is: 'Get off your butt.'"

If he has earned criticism from the auto industry, the governor has won praise and recognition from other quarters. He is featured on the covers of Outdoor, Newsweek and Fortune magazines as an international "green" leader. He will speak Thursday to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City on his environmental efforts. And at the 2007 conference of the British Conservative Party this September, he is expected to promote a brand of Republicanism that he says can be both friendly to the environment, and to the economy.

"We can do both: we can protect the environment and we can protect the economy," Schwarzenegger said Wednesday of climate-friendly technologies, noting that cell phones cost upwards of \$1,600 when the technology was first new, but that he recently purchased one for his daughter for less than \$90.

The governor met Wednesday morning with Stephen Johnson, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator, to press for a federal waiver allowing California to restrict auto emissions. The meeting produced no commitments from Johnson.

He met Wednesday afternoon with Feinstein, who endorsed his \$6 billion water infrastructure plan that calls for building more surface and groundwater storage, protecting the Delta and promoting conservation measures.

On Wednesday night, Schwarzenegger was scheduled to fly to New York to dine with Gov. Elliot Spitzer and to appear at a fundraiser. ###

### **GOP seizes climate issue; Logging, nuke plants can fight warming, lawmakers say** ***Sacramento Bee – 4/8/07***

**By E.J. Schultz, staff writer**

How popular is global warming as a political issue? So popular that even conservative state lawmakers are getting into the act, using the issue to sell everything from building dams and nuclear power plants to thinning forests.

The arguments are simple enough: Higher temperatures reduce mountain snowpack, so more dams are needed to capture winter precipitation that falls as rain.

Nuclear power plants produce few greenhouse gases, the leading cause of manmade warming.

Forest fires, on the other hand, send plenty of gases into the air -- so why not encourage timber companies to clear more brush to reduce fire risk?

Environmentalists, who are skeptical of the proposals, are peeved that the other side has stolen their issue.

"Clearly these legislators are just dressing up their existing legislation with a thin veneer of a pretended concern about global warming," said Bill Magavern, senior representative for Sierra Club California.

Republican lawmakers strongly opposed last year's landmark legislation -- Assembly Bill 32 -- to cut the state's greenhouse gases by 25 percent by 2020. They criticized the bill as a job-killer and a primitive attempt at placing local controls on a global problem.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Have they converted? Not necessarily, says Assemblyman Chuck DeVore, R-Irvine, author of the nuclear bill.

"It's politics," he said. "If the (Democratic) leadership has said this is a problem ... then all I'm suggesting is maybe this is one of the solutions we should look at."

That Republicans are now talking about climate change shows how far it has come, said GOP strategist Dan Schnur.

"You can always tell that an issue has evolved when both parties start using it," he said. "They're not arguing about global warming anymore in the state Legislature. They're arguing about what issue it next influences."

Without the backing of environmentalists, the Republican proposals will likely face an uphill fight in the Democratic-controlled Legislature.

- DeVore's Assembly Bill 719 would lift a 31-year-old state ban on new nuclear power plants, clearing the way for a \$4 billion plant proposed for Fresno by a group of prominent business leaders. He has titled the bill the "California Zero Carbon Dioxide Emission Electrical Generation Act of 2007."

About 13 percent of the state's electricity supply comes from nuclear plants, including two in California - San Onofre in Southern California and Diablo Canyon in San Luis Obispo County, according to a report last year by the California Energy Commission. But a state law passed in 1976 prohibits the construction of more plants until the federal government finds a way to dispose of high-level nuclear waste.

Unlike plants that burn fossil fuels, nuclear plants emit few greenhouse gases. Such gases trap heat in the atmosphere, causing global warming, according to scientists.

Nuclear watchdog groups say nuclear plants are too expensive.

Yet the emergence of global warming as a hot issue has given nuclear supporters some momentum. A 2005 energy measure passed by Congress includes federal loan guarantees for nuclear plant financing. Even House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, has said nuclear power should at least be on the table.

- Senate Bill 59 by Sen. Dave Cogdill, R-Modesto, contains Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's plan to put a \$4 billion water bond on the 2008 ballot, including \$2 billion for two dams -- one just above Friant Dam near Fresno, on the San Joaquin River, and another on Sites reservoir in Colusa and Glenn counties.

The state Department of Water Resources predicts warming will result in a loss of at least a quarter of the state's snowmelt runoff by 2050. This has led the department to recommend more surface storage to capture winter rain that today falls as snow.

Environmentalists, who prefer conservation and more groundwater storage, say the governor is misguided.

The proposed site at Friant sits at the base of some of the highest mountains in the state. So even with rising temperatures, there will be plenty of snowpack at those higher elevations, said Barry Nelson, a senior analyst with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Also, research suggests global warming will cause more evaporation, meaning less runoff from the state's rivers and streams, Nelson said.

"You could be building a dam to capture water that won't be there in the future," he said.

- Cogdill's Senate Bill 572 would direct the state to consider emissions created by catastrophic wildfires as officials implement the new global warming law.

Cogdill is still finalizing the bill's details but said it could allow timber companies to cut down more trees without going through extensive and costly environmental reviews.

That would give loggers more of an incentive to clear the smaller brush that fuels forest fires, he said, and at the same time could help revive the region's long-struggling timber industry. #

### **In California, warming trend renews water debate**

***Associated Press – 4/7/07***

**By Samantha Young, staff writer**

ORANGE COVE, Calif. -- A century ago, when Harvey Bailey's great uncle happened upon this spot where California's Central Valley begins its ascent toward the Sierra Nevada, he could tell it was a land made for farming.

Rich soils, abundant ground water, moderate temperatures. His ranch flourished as a modest family citrus farm since he planted the first tree in 1913.

Three decades later came a change that would transform not just the Bailey ranch, but the entire San Joaquin Valley. A dam in the foothills to the northwest created Millerton Lake, and nine years after that - 1952 -- a canal carried water from the reservoir to farming communities lining the edge of the valley from Fresno to Bakersfield.

California and the federal government had embarked on an era of building dams and hundreds of miles of canals, an ambitious engineering feat designed to capture the massive Sierra snowmelt and channel it to the state's far-flung cities and farms. It marked the beginning of California's population explosion and transformed the Central Valley into one of the richest agricultural regions in the world.

Roughly half a century after that era ended, California finds itself forced to rethink its extensive system of capturing and delivering water. The state's expanding population is part of the reason, but it is the effects of global climate change that have given policy makers a sense of urgency.

Climate change is expected to alter California's hydrology in dramatic ways. Scientists predict the available supply of water may not be able to meet demand, while the existing levee and reservoir systems will be insufficient to contain spring flooding. Finding solutions and ways to pay for them already is proving contentious, opening a new chapter in California's ongoing saga of water wars.

The debate has pitted farmers and metropolitan water planners who argue for more dams and canals against environmentalists and Democrats who control the Legislature. They favor conservation and oppose any measures that will leave a heavy imprint on the environment.

California's era of dam-building helped the Bailey ranch evolve from a humble family farm into a massive citrus operation with 2,000 acres of orange and lemon trees. Harvey Bailey believes a transformation similar to the one California undertook more than half a century ago will be required to ensure its farms and cities

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

thrive in the decades ahead.

"You can't sit on your thumbs and not plan for the future," Bailey said. "Planning for the future means you've got to have more water supplies you can draw on year round."

California requires a lot of water, mostly for its nearly \$32 billion-a-year agriculture industry. The state uses 43.1 million acre feet a year, enough water to fill three Lake Tahoes.

Yet scientific models show the state's water supply to be the natural resource most vulnerable to the effects of rising global temperatures. The state's leading scientists and hydrologists generally agree on the potential consequences. Among them:

- The Sierra snowpack is expected to shrink and melt faster, leaving insufficient supplies for cities, farms and hydroelectric plants during the hottest months of summer and fall, when demand is greatest.
- Prolonged droughts along the Colorado River will force California and six other Western states to reduce how much they draw from the river.
- A rising Pacific Ocean will push salty ocean water into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the heart of the state's water-delivery system. That could jeopardize the fresh water supplies for 23 million Californians - two-thirds of the state's population.
- Earlier melting of the snowpack coinciding with spring storms could overwhelm any part of the 1,600 miles of earthen levees, flooding Central Valley communities that have seen an explosion of suburban growth in recent years.

The most crucial piece of California's water system is the snowpack that builds each winter along the 400-mile-long Sierra Nevada. It acts as California's natural reservoir, holding a third of the state's water for drinking and irrigation.

For decades, the natural cycle has remained relatively unchanged: The snowpack builds through winter and early spring, then melts gradually from late spring through midsummer. That allows the reservoirs to fill and state water managers to release the water in late summer and fall, operating on a schedule that satisfies cities and farmers.

Warming temperatures already are beginning to disrupt that pattern.

"We're going to have more water when we don't want it and less water when we want it," said John Dracup, an environmental engineering professor at the University of California, Berkeley and an expert on California's hydrology.

The Sierra snowpack already is showing signs of change, similar to those seen in Colorado and other Rocky Mountain states.

Overall, it has shrunk about 10 percent below its wintertime average. The water content contained in the snowpack this spring, the calculation that determines summer water deliveries, was at its lowest level in nearly two decades.

Scientific models show even warmer temperatures in the future could result in far more precipitation falling as rain than snow, reducing the snowpack 25-50 percent by the end of the century.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The situation is equally alarming along the Colorado River, which provides water to seven Western states but is in the midst of a prolonged drought. Southern California gets about 20 percent of its water from the Colorado.

A report released in February by the National Research Council projects more severe droughts along the Colorado River in the Southwest as temperatures rise. The council is part of the National Academies, an independent organization chartered by Congress to advise the government on scientific matters.

Cities and irrigation districts throughout California have become increasingly vocal about addressing the threat of future water shortages, saying they cannot afford to wait.

The agency that supplies water to much of Silicon Valley, for example, has begun incorporating the possible effects of climate change into its water-management plans, much as it does for earthquakes and flooding.

As part of that effort, the Santa Clara Valley Water District is trying to make itself less reliant on the delta, a system that provides half the district's water but is especially vulnerable to rising sea levels that would make the water too salty. The agency is developing recycling and conservation projects and is working with other San Francisco Bay area water agencies to build a pilot desalination plant.

"Local governments and local water districts are going to have to plan now for the future," said Tony Estremera board chairman of the Santa Clara Valley Water District. "It's time for the reality of global warming. We have to get ready to deal with the problems."

Dealing with those problems on a statewide scale, however, will not prove easy.

The options vary widely but have a common thread: All are expensive.

Farmers, agricultural irrigation districts and some city water managers favor building more reservoirs, an idea that has at least the partial backing of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. He has proposed spending \$4.5 billion to build one reservoir in a valley north of Sacramento and another in a canyon above Millerton Lake near Fresno.

That reservoir has enabled Bailey and his brother to more than triple the size of their great uncle's farm in the aptly named Orange Cove. But competition for the water is increasing, as the town has doubled in population since 1990, a trend seen throughout the Central Valley.

This past year, the town's mayor negotiated with a neighboring county for additional water.

Bailey and other farmers say they need an additional reservoir if they are to have enough water to meet their irrigation demands in the years ahead.

"If you don't get rain, you've still got to put water on the crops," Bailey said.

The rapid growth in the Central Valley and the prospect of changing conditions in rivers and reservoirs has begun to worry many California government leaders and water managers. The water content contained in the central Sierra snowpack this year was less than 50 percent of normal in the most recent survey taken in late March, a reading that was apparent at Millerton Lake last month.

Much of the boat ramp remained exposed, and the high water point was visible on the rocks along the shoreline, like the ring around a draining bathtub. Bailey and others said building a second reservoir above the existing one would ensure ample water supplies even in dry years.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

State water officials support that view.

"Storage has a whole different feel to it now," said state Department of Water Resources Director Lester Snow. "It's a way to manage the potential impacts of climate change."

Environmentalists and Democrats in the Legislature see it differently. They oppose building new reservoirs and favor alternatives such as storing more water in underground aquifers and implementing tougher conservation measures.

California already has made major strides in reducing its water use. The state's total annual water consumption has remained the same since 1970 even as its population has ballooned to nearly 37 million. Its per capita water use has plunged to less than half of what it was then.

But even with such success, conservationists say more should be done, especially with the state's population expected to hit 55 million by 2050.

Among the proposals they favor is spending \$2 billion over seven years to increase the use of water-saving devices such as low-flush toilets and low-flow shower heads. They also urge increased water recycling for use in industrial plants, to recharge underground storage basins and restore wildlife habitat.

Environmentalists advocate changing the way water is released from the state's 1,300 reservoirs so the action is better coordinated with meteorological forecasting. Current practices waste about 20 percent of the state's water, said Aris Georgakakos, a Georgia Tech University civil engineering professor who has studied the American River system near Sacramento.

Opponents of new reservoirs say desalination, while expensive, would provide a more cost-effective alternative.

"Climate change is not a justification for building new storage," said Peter Gleick, president of the Oakland-based Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security. "At the moment, there are cheaper, faster alternatives to meet those same needs."

As difficult as it will be to reach consensus over new dams, no debate is expected to be as contentious as the proposal for a canal to divert fresh water around the delta.

A \$3 billion canal would send Sacramento River water around the environmentally fragile delta directly to cities in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay area, boosting water exports by 6 million acre feet a year.

Doing so would remove the potential for catastrophe if sea levels rise or an earthen levee gives way and allows water from San Francisco Bay to rush in. Such scenarios would make the water too salty for urban or farm use.

California tried a similar proposal in 1982 in an initiative that divided the state. Voters in the north resoundingly defeated the proposed Peripheral Canal because they feared too much water would be shipped south -- anxiety that continues to resonate.

The sharp divisions already evident over dam-building, a canal to circumvent the delta and other proposals have prompted some lawmakers and policy experts to call for a temporary break in pitching such projects.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

They say more study is needed before California embarks on an expensive quest for solutions that ultimately could prove insufficient or counterproductive.

"California water policy has always been done in fits and starts," said Assemblywoman Lois Wolk, D-Davis, one of the Legislature's top water experts. "All the easy things have been done. All the truly hard decisions are left."

### **A look at where Californians get their water for farms and cities**

How does a state with nearly 37 million people get enough water for irrigating crops, keeping golf courses green and taking showers? A complex system of local, state and federal water projects has done the job for decades. Here's a look at California's water sources:

-- Central Valley Project: Controlled by the federal government, it is the state's largest supplier of water. The project links 20 dams and reservoirs and nearly 500 miles of canals and pumping stations from the Trinity River east of Redding to the base of the Tehachapi Mountains south of Bakersfield. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation delivers roughly 7 million acre feet of water a year, irrigating a third of the state's farmland and supplying drinking water for 4 million people.

-- State Water Project: The 444-mile California Aqueduct is the heart of the state-run water program. It sends water from the north -- which gets most of the rainfall and snowmelt runoff -- to the San Francisco Bay area and Southern California. The network of 33 reservoirs and aqueducts conveys water south from Lake Oroville, ending at Lake Perris in Riverside County. The state Department of Water Resources delivers about 3 million acre feet of water each year to more than 23 million Californians and 755,000 acres of farmland.

-- Colorado River: California is one of seven Western states drawing water from the Colorado River, using it to irrigate crops in the Palo Verde, Imperial and Coachella valleys. It also is a vital source for Southern California cities, including Los Angeles and San Diego.

-- Groundwater: California pumps an estimated 16.6 million acre-feet a year from its underground water basins. The state's 525 aquifers are estimated to hold nearly 20 times the amount of water that can be stored behind the hundreds of reservoirs in the state. Scientists say between 250 million acre feet and 450 million acre feet of groundwater can be pumped economically, six times more than the amount of water stored in reservoirs.

-- Local supplies: More than 600 cities and local agencies provide water through locally developed projects and imported supplies. One example is San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy Reservoir project, which pipes water from the Yosemite Valley to the city.

Sources: U.S. Geological Survey, Water Education Foundation, California Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. ###

### **Are more dams California's way to cope with global warming?**

#### ***Associated Press – 4/7/07***

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed \$4.5 billion in bonds to build two new dams, which his administration says are needed to boost water supplies. Most Democratic lawmakers and conservationists are opposed. Here are some of the issues involved in the debate:

Q: Why are more dams under consideration?

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

A: Scientists say climate change will reduce California's snowpack -- its largest source of water -- by as much as 90 percent by the end of the century. Department of Water Resources director Lester Snow has said dams are a key part of the state's strategy to accommodate future population growth and the effects of global warming.

Building more reservoirs would give the state more space to store about 3 million acre feet of water. By comparison, Lake Oroville north of Sacramento holds about 3.5 million acre fee. The additional water likely would be used for water supply, restoration of fish habitat and improving water quality.

The additional dams also could provide more places to send water when rivers in Northern California and the Central Valley are close to topping their banks and levees, potentially saving communities below the dams from flooding.

Q: What are some of the concerns about building new dams?

A: Dams are expensive and alter the natural flows and habitats of rivers. Opponents say a dwindling snowpack could make some existing dams obsolete because global warming could lead to less water flowing from the Sierra as snowmelt. They say the state should invest money on alternatives such as conservation efforts, desalination, water recycling and recharging groundwater.

Q: Where could dams be built?

A: The state has two leading candidates for new reservoirs. The first is known as Temperance Flat in the narrow canyon above Millerton Lake on the San Joaquin River, northeast of Fresno. It could hold up to 1.3 million acre feet of water, which local officials and farmers say they need to satisfy agriculture and a growing population.

The state is considering another area along the Sacramento River in the rolling hills and grasslands of the Antelope Valley, about 60 miles north of the state capital. River water would be diverted to the valley and would flood about 14,000 acres.

Q: Why don't we just finish the Auburn Dam?

A: It's the project that never seems to go away. Congress approved a dam along the American River in the 1960s as a way to provide more water to farmers in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. But a 5.7-magnitude earthquake in 1975 north of Sacramento exposed a fault line that ran under the construction site, bringing the project to a halt.

Republicans in Congress are anxious to get construction crews back to the dam site in the Sierra foothills east of Sacramento. Supporters say it will improve Sacramento's flood protection, but recent cost estimates have put the price tag at more than \$10 billion. It's unlikely the Democrat-controlled Congress will back such an expensive dam in a scenic canyon of the American River.

Q: What are the alternatives to dams?

A: Local water agencies are trying to improve methods to recycle water for use at industrial plants, to recharge groundwater basins and restore habitat. Some coastal cities are considering removing salt from sea water, but the technology is expensive.

Pumping water into the ground could free up reservoir space, but one limitation is the amount of time it takes for water to seep into deep aquifers.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The state Department of Water Resources estimates that cities can save up to 2.3 million acre feet of water by encouraging residents to install low-flush toilets and other water-efficient devices. Meanwhile, farmers can reduce the amount of water used for agriculture by as much as 2 million acre feet by 2030 if they use water-saving pipes and switch to crops that require less water.

Q: Is the Peripheral Canal back?

A: State Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, has introduced a bill that would allow for a canal that sends Sacramento River water around the delta. The idea was resoundingly defeated by voters in the 1980s, but the fragility of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has led some researchers to give the proposal another look.

A canal would deliver fresh water directly to the San Francisco Bay area and Southern California. Relying on the delta is risky for several reasons: Rising sea levels or a break in an earthen levee could contaminate delta water with higher levels of salinity, making it useless for municipal and agricultural use. ###

### WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY:

#### **DWR argues to keep Central Valley water flowing** ***Central Valley Business Times – 4/12/07***

The Department of Water Resources has today filed its objections to a proposed court decision that could cut off the normal supply of fresh water to the Central Valley and 23 million Californians in the Valley and Southern California.

An Alameda County Superior Court order -- which is pending final action -- would shut down the State Water Project export pumps in the Delta if appropriate permits could not be obtained in 60 days.

On March 22, Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch issued a draft ruling in a case brought by Watershed Enforcers that DWR did not have the required state permit to kill protected fish species in the Delta by sucking them into the huge turbines used at the Tracy pumping station to move fresh water southward.

The court says the state has failed to get the required permits.

To address the court's draft order, DWR says it has submitted a notice to the Department of Fish and Game requesting a "consistency determination" that the federal biological opinions for the state-listed fish are consistent with the California Endangered Species Act. If issued, a determination of consistency by DFG would satisfy the requirements of CESA, the department contends.

DWR also filed a declaration detailing potential economic, environmental, and power and water supply impacts of shutting down the Delta pumps. The pumps are necessary in order to send water to cities, farms and industry in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast, and Southern California. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### **State hopes to stave off order to shut water supply**

***Contra Costa Times – 4/13/07***

**By Mike Taugher, staff writer**

State water officials on Wednesday asked for a new hearing in their attempt to stave off a court order that could shut down a water delivery system that serves 25 million Californians, a move that state lawyers argue would have consequences ranging from severe to catastrophic.

In court papers, state water officials argued that a shutdown would reduce available water supplies, force farm and city water agencies to overdraw groundwater basins and dramatically lower reservoirs across the state.

An Alameda County Superior Court judge ruled in late March that the State Water Project was in violation of the California Endangered Species Act.

He threatened to shut it down unless the state could obtain permits to kill protected salmon and Delta smelt.

Judge Frank Roesch gave water officials until Wednesday to object to his proposed decision, which would shut down the water project 60 days after it becomes final.

On Monday, water officials asked regulators to endorse existing federal permits. If regulators agree, that could satisfy the state law.

But environmentalists argue that the federal permits, which are being rewritten to address several flaws, are inadequate and they could sue again if the request is granted.

I think he should just issue the order and let the cards fall where they may, said Michael Lozeau, a lawyer who represented the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance in bringing the lawsuit last fall.

Lozeau said the state could obtain permits required under the law, though it might reduce water availability.

He also said the water agency should have sought permits earlier instead of letting the issue build to a crisis. ###

### **Senator Feinstein Endorses Governor Schwarzenegger's Water Infrastructure; Governor Joins Senator Feinstein to Outline California's Environmental, Water Infrastructure Priorities**

***By the Office of the Governor – 4/12/07***

**YubaNet.com**

Senator Dianne Feinstein today endorsed Governor Schwarzenegger's \$6 billion water infrastructure plan at a meeting today in Washington D.C. The two met to discuss California's major environmental and water infrastructure issues and her introduction of a national Low Carbon Fuel Standard consistent with the Governor's call to implement this groundbreaking policy at the federal level.

"I am very pleased to receive Senator Feinstein's support for this critically-needed water infrastructure plan to address California's growing water needs that include storage, conveyance and conservation," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "Today's announcement proves that California's water needs are not a partisan issue."

The Governor outlined his \$6 billion plan, Senate Bill 59 authored by Senator Dave Cogdill, to build more surface and groundwater storage, protect the Delta and promote conservation measures statewide. The proposal includes \$4.5 billion for increased water storage, \$1 billion for Delta

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

sustainability, and \$450 million for conservation and restoration projects.

The Governor also applauded Senator Feinstein's introduction of the Clean Fuels and Vehicles Act last month that would establish a comprehensive national program to increase the availability of low carbon fuels and to require a reduction in emissions from vehicles, based on California's own vehicle tailpipe emissions law. If passed, this bill will reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation sector by 22% below projected levels by 2030 (or 662 million metric tons of carbon dioxide), equivalent to taking over 108 million cars off the road for a year.

"I applaud Senator Feinstein for proposing this policy at the national level. A healthy environment, a growing economy and strong national security are all reasons why we need a Low Carbon Fuel Standard for America," said the Governor.

"In California, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard will more than triple the size of our renewable fuels market and put more than 7 million alternative fuel or hybrid vehicles on our roads by 2020 without any new government spending. It's also great for our national security because we will be less dependent on foreign oil and less vulnerable to price shocks and instability beyond our borders."

California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard was introduced by Governor Schwarzenegger earlier this year to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and lower California's reliance on foreign oil. By 2020 the standard will reduce the carbon intensity of California's passenger vehicle fuels by at least 10 percent. In February, the Governor called for a national Low Carbon Fuel Standard.

"I would also like to thank Senator Feinstein for her leadership on levee repair funding and for pushing \$94.1 million through the Senate Appropriations Committee to help fix California's eroding levees. Once approved by Congress and the President, this money will be used by the Army Corps of Engineers to repair 213 sites on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers that were damaged by storms in 2006," said Governor Schwarzenegger.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta supplies water to 25 million people in California and is the lifeblood of California's \$32 billion agriculture industry, irrigating millions of acres of highly productive farmland. However, the Delta is vulnerable to salt water contamination from rising sea levels and natural disasters. Many of the 1,100 miles of deteriorating levees throughout the Delta are at risk for failure due to earthquakes and major flood events.

Previously, the federal government shared repair costs with the state. But the current federal budget has significantly cut Corps funding, forcing California to contribute an additional \$175 million for levee repairs. The State has completed repairs for 33 critical erosion sites and is working to complete, by September 2007, another 71 critical sites that resulted from the 2006 flood damage. ###

### **Panel fears mercury lost in Bay *Contra Costa Times* – 4/10/07 By Paul Rogers, MediaNews staff**

Hundreds of pounds of mercury from Bay Area oil refineries are unaccounted for and could be flowing into San Francisco Bay every year, poisoning fish and threatening public health, state water regulators said Monday.

Until now, old mercury mines in the hills of San Jose and the Sierra Nevada were considered the Bay's main sources of mercury -- a neurotoxin that builds up in fish and can cause brain damage in children. But new research by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board has concluded that

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

roughly 3,700 pounds of mercury a year is coming into the five Bay Area refineries in crude oil -- and nobody can account for where it goes after the oil is refined into gasoline.

On Thursday, staff members of the regional water board plan to order all five Bay Area refineries to measure the mercury concentrations in their crude oil and account for where it goes -- in the air, in waste water and in solid waste sludge -- or face fines of \$1,000 a day.

"In our mind there still is a mystery. We're trying to connect the dots and understand where mercury in crude oil ends up," said Bruce Wolfe, executive officer of the board.

Environmentalists think much of the mercury may be escaping as air pollution up the refineries' smokestacks, then washing into the Bay when it rains. If that is the case, scientific understanding of the source of mercury pollution -- the most serious toxic contaminant in the Bay -- would be turned on its head.

"This is huge," said Sejal Choksi, program director for San Francisco Baykeeper, an environmental group. "We might be looking at the main cause of the mercury problem in the Bay."

The 3,700 pounds of mercury that water board officials now estimate to be entering the refineries in crude oil every year is more than all other sources of mercury combined that flow annually in the Bay. That totals about 2,698 pounds a year.

The 3,700 pounds represents more than 15 times the amount estimated to be leaching from the old Almaden Quicksilver Mines near San Jose.

The five refineries affected are Chevron, Conoco Phillips, Shell, Tesoro and Valero in Contra Costa and Solano counties. Every day, they refine roughly 760,000 barrels of oil into gasoline.

In 2005, the regional water board, a state agency in Oakland whose members are appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, ordered the refineries to complete a study by May 31, 2007, of how much mercury is in their air emissions. The oil companies told the board on Feb. 19, however, that they would not be finished with the study until 2009.

Tupper Hull, a spokesman for the Western States Petroleum Association, said the refineries are working to learn how much -- if any -- of the mercury in crude oil ends up in the Bay.

"We're going to know the answer to that when the air study is completed," Hull said. "It's really not useful to speculate until we have the data. We are in the process of getting the data."

Mercury is a naturally occurring metal that is harmful to fish, wildlife and humans in high concentrations. It does not degrade in the environment.

Young children and pregnant women are most at risk from its effects, particularly for birth defects. For children, long-term exposure to mercury can impair physical coordination, decrease brain function and even cause mental retardation. In adults, it can impair hearing and speech, blur vision and damage the kidneys.

Around the Bay Area, government signs warn that it is unsafe to eat fish because of mercury poisoning. Health officials long have been concerned about immigrant communities and the lowest-income residents who eat fish from the Bay as a staple of their diets.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Until now, the main sources of mercury in the Bay are thought to have been long-closed mines in the Sierra Nevada and Almaden Hills -- which gave the San Jose Mercury News its name. Mercury from those mines was used to separate gold from the ore during the Gold Rush.

Along with the mines, other mercury sources include consumer products such as thermometers -- and even smog coal burning in China that drifts across the Pacific Ocean.

"The Bay is currently very polluted with mercury," Choksi said. "The mercury problem is so bad that fish in the Bay are unsafe to eat. We really need to get to the bottom of figuring out what is causing the problem."

Hull said the air study is behind schedule because "it was found to be a much more difficult and technologically challenging project" than originally thought.

"We have worked collaboratively with the water board up to this point to fully understand mercury discharges from the refineries," he said. "Once this air study is completed, we will have a very good and clear picture of the refineries' discharges into the Bay."

The board's new order this week will give the refineries until Oct. 31, 2008, to complete their studies. But it requires much more than the old order. It mandates that they test their oil for mercury, test air emissions, waste water emissions and solid waste.

In a report that will be presented to the water board Wednesday, Wolfe and other water board staff members note that the oil Bay Area refineries use has higher mercury concentrations than oil from other areas.

Most oil has mercury levels of 10 parts per billion. But oil from the San Joaquin Valley, where 40 percent of the crude oil used by the Bay Area refiners comes from, has mercury levels of 80 to 30,000 parts per billion, they concluded. Using a conservative number, 100 parts per billion, the water board concluded that the oil contains 3,747 pounds of mercury.

Water board staff members know that about 1,000 pounds of that goes to hazardous waste landfills out of the Bay Area as sludge when the refineries perform maintenance. The fate of the rest is a mystery.

"We're saying it looks like this might be more significant than we thought before," Wolfe said. "We want a better understanding." ###

### **Court Decision Threatens California's Water Supply; Pumping Station Killing Smelt, Salmon *ABC Channel 30 (Fresno) – 4/9/07***

**Noel Cisneros**

Apr. 9 - KGO - The clock is ticking on a court decision that has tremendous consequences for California's water. A state judge is threatening to turn off the pumps that deliver water to 24 million Californians and much of the state's farmland.

The reason? The pumping station is violating the Endangered Species Act by killing smelt and salmon.

The Harvey Banks pumping station outside Tracy pumps 10,000 cubic feet of water a second -- the equivalent flow of a large river.

An Alameda County Superior Court judge has ruled the operation is illegal, a violation of the Endangered Species Act, a killer of smelt and salmon.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Rep. George Miller, (D) Martinez: "A lot of people who've failed to respond to our economic and environmental concerns in the San Francisco Bay Area about the drainage of this water to Southern California are now scrambling because they've been caught. The judge caught them red-handed."

Red-handed because the state Department of Water Resources was pumping without proper permits from the Department of Fish and Game.

Carl Pope of the Sierra Club says the ruling forces all the stakeholders back to the negotiating table.

Carl Pope, Sierra Club executive director: "This decision basically says to people who manage the water system, 'you don't have a choice. You have to work together.' It's a very big wake-up call."

The judge will give the Department of Water Resources 60 days to get its permits right or face cutoff of water supplies to 24 million Californians from San Jose to Los Angeles. It would be a multi-billion dollar hit to the California economy.

Lester Snow, California Department Of Water Resources: "Even if he were right, his remedy of shutting off the pump in 60 days is just not acceptable."

The director of Department of Water Resources has asked the judge for 30 days to get the green light from Fish and Game -- something Fish and Game has not committed to. It's a technicality to be sure, but a technicality with teeth.

Lester Snow: "We want to respond to the judge to show we're in compliance but also show that there's a bigger picture out there that needs to be dealt with." ###

### **Water chief seeks looser rules on Delta smelt**

***Contra Costa Times* – 4/10/07**

**By Mike Taugher, staff writer**

The state should adopt the provisions of flawed federal permits meant to protect Delta fish in order to keep water flowing to farmers and 25 million Californians, the state's chief water manager said Monday.

The State Water Project contributes only partially to a severe ecological decline that has some experts worried Delta smelt could be in imminent danger of extinction, said state Department of Water Resources Director Lester Snow.

Snow commented as his department prepared to fight off a looming court order that threatens to shut down the State Water Project, which is operating without state permits to kill endangered fish.

He wants water regulators to endorse federal permits that may not meet state standards.

"You could have the situation of an overreaction of curtailing all pumping that could result in literally hundreds of billions of dollars in harm to the economy, and not have any impact on Delta smelt," Snow said. "We are going to do everything we can to make sure that doesn't happen."

Last month, an Alameda County Superior Court judge found that the state's largest water delivery system was operating in violation of the California Endangered Species Act because it never received state permits to kill protected salmon or Delta smelt.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The proposed order would shut down the pumps near Tracy in 60 days unless officials come into compliance with the law. The judge has not yet started the clock on those 60 days and gave state water officials until Wednesday to persuade him to change his mind.

Meanwhile, in a sign that the Delta's problems are getting more attention from legislative leaders than they have in many years, leading Senate Democrats on Monday unveiled legislation seeking a new Delta management strategy by the end of the year.

The legislation singled out options identified in a February report from the Public Policy Institute of California that, in essence, recommended either a dramatic reduction in California's reliance on Delta water or construction of something akin to the highly controversial Peripheral Canal that voters rejected in 1982.

Snow described the potentially devastating effects of a prolonged shutdown in a separate letter Monday to Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, the chairman of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee.

San Joaquin Valley farmers would overpump groundwater supplies and energy managers would lose the flexibility of having power generated by the water project, Snow said.

By September, Snow predicted, all the reservoirs south of the Delta would likely fall far below normal operating levels, leaving users vulnerable to supply disruptions caused by quakes, levee breaks or drought.

Because of the extreme consequences of shutting off the pumps, few expect it to occur. But whether the state can resolve the problem in a way that withstands court scrutiny is unclear.

Environmental and angling groups have hinted strongly that they would not hesitate to sue state wildlife regulators if water deliveries continue unimpeded.

Rather than apply for a state permit, Snow said, his agency will ask state Department of Fish and Game to endorse federal permits to kill endangered fish at the pumps.

Fish and Game Director Ryan Broddrick described that alternative recently as "problematic," though he appeared less pessimistic in an interview Monday.

First, the federal permits were based on a legal standard that the pumps not jeopardize fish species with extinction. The state's legal standard appears to be tougher: It requires water managers to offset the deaths of every individual legally protected fish.

Second, the federal permits are widely viewed as deeply flawed. Environmentalists have sued to change them and federal agencies are rewriting them.

The permit that was supposed to be protecting Delta smelt from water operations was in effect as smelt populations plummeted.

And the federal permit to kill salmon at the Delta pumps is being rewritten because federal investigators found that higher level managers improperly rewrote restrictions favored by federal biologists.

In an interview Monday, Broddrick said provisions in the federal permits allow water operations to be modified in ways that might satisfy state regulators. As an example, he cited decisions early this year to limit the pumps' effect on two key Delta rivers.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

A pumping shutdown also could deprive water supplies to protected species in other parts of the state, he said.

"Shutting down the State Water Project doesn't solve the problem for smelt or a whole host of other species," he said. "Where's the balance point?" ###

### **State officials work to avoid water shortage**

***Bakersfield Californian – 4/9/07***

**By Vic Pollard, staff writer**

SACRAMENTO -- With Kern County farmers and water officials figuratively crossing their fingers, state water officials launched a process Monday they hope will persuade a judge not to shut down the pumps that bring massive amounts of vital irrigation water to the county.

But a spokesman for the environmental organization that filed the suit in the judge's Bay Area court said the state's action is too little, too late and likely won't halt the shutdown of the huge pumps that funnel water into the California Aqueduct.

State Water Project managers asked the state Department of Fish and Game to declare that they have essentially complied with state environmental laws in their operation of the huge pumps that lift water out of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and put it into the California Aqueduct.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch ruled last month that the state cannot continue pumping without a permit that allows the pumps to kill limited numbers of endangered salmon and delta smelt under carefully regulated conditions.

He threatened to shut down the pumps within 60 days, at the height of the summer irrigation season, if the state doesn't get a permit.

Kern County Water Agency officials said that could hit local farmers with millions of dollars in unexpected costs to keep their crops alive. More than one gallon of water out of every five used or drunk in Kern County comes from the aqueduct.

Other areas of the state that depend on the aqueduct, including the Los Angeles metropolitan area, would suffer heavily as well.

In a conference call with reporters, Lester Snow, director of the state Department of Water Resources said such an action could "lay waste to the entire economy of the state of California."

Jim Beck, general manager of the Kern County water agency, agreed and said the agency strongly supports the request by the state Department of Water Resources for a declaration that the state project is being operated in "consistency" with state endangered species laws.

"We feel that the State Water Project has an excellent record of providing assets that meet all the environmental goals of the project," Beck said.

But Bill Jennings, executive director of the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, which sued the state, said he has strong doubts that a declaration of consistency issued by one department of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's administration to another would satisfy his organization or Judge Roesch.

"We're disappointed to see the Department of Water Resources continue to play the shell game of denial" in its resistance to the need for a permit, Jennings said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Department of Fish and Game Director Ryan Broddick insisted that his department will exercise "due diligence" in making sure that the water project complies with applicable environmental laws.

"It won't be pro forma," he said. But at a similar conference call with reporters in March, Broddick strongly supported Snow's contention that the project has long complied with environmental requirements.

Snow said the project will also apply for the permit the judge wants to see, but that will take well into next year, and it is also planning an even more comprehensive species protection plan that will take years to complete.

But whatever happens, Beck said he fears this is just the latest in long series of court cases and other actions that will take more water away from farmers and other users of environmental programs.

"We continually experience long-term incremental losses of water in Kern County from the state project," Beck said.

Beck and other local officials believe the solution is construction of a controversial canal to route water around the periphery of the delta so that the pumps will not kill so many fish.

### **What it means**

A Bay Area judge's threat to shut down the State Water Project in 60 days could devastate much of Kern County's agriculture industry. It would cost farmers "millions and millions" of dollars they had not planned to spend this year because water costs would be higher, local water officials say. But environmentalists say such a move could force the state to take steps needed to prevent endangered fish species from becoming extinct. ###

## **FLOOD CONTROL AND LEVEES:**

### **W. Sac voters get look at scope of levee work**

***Sacramento Bee* – 4/13/07**

**By Deb Kollars, staff writer**

While one flood tax election is nearing an end, another on the West Sacramento side of the Sacramento River began revving up Thursday as property owners got a deeper look at the heavy-duty levee work their community needs and what they may have to pay for it.

According to a "Draft Engineer's Report" released Thursday, West Sacramento faces the same deep underseepage and levee stability problems that took the Natomas area by surprise last year.

Although final geotechnical findings still were not available Thursday, the engineer's report marked the first time West Sacramento officially acknowledged its levees do not meet 100-year protection levels -- considered a minimal safety threshold by the federal government.

To address those deficiencies and raise protection to higher 200-year levels, West Sacramento is planning to take the same step as its neighbors to the east: hold a weighted mail ballot election asking property owners to tax themselves for greater flood protection.

"People are beginning to understand this is something we need to do," said Steve Patek, West Sacramento's director of community development.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

On the east side of the river, 140,000 property owners have until next Thursday to turn in ballots in the mail election being run by the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, known as SAFCA.

The agency, which includes large portions of Sacramento County and the southern end of Sutter County, hopes to raise \$326 million over 30 years from the new assessment district.

The money would help pay for \$2.68 billion in levee improvements and work at Folsom Dam, with the bulk paid by state and federal sources.

The work would bring 200-year protection, meaning levees could handle massive storms with a 1 in 200 chance of occurring in any given year.

Right now, some areas of Sacramento don't even have 100-year protection.

Among major cities in America, none has greater flood risks than Sacramento.

On Thursday, SAFCA will hold a 3 p.m. public hearing where people can comment on the assessment, turn in their ballots if they haven't already, or change their votes.

One week later, April 26, the election results are to be announced.

While that election winds down, West Sacramento's is gearing up.

West Sacramento is a fast-growing city wrapped on all sides by levees. Just a year ago, West Sacramento residents and officials believed they had nearly 300-year flood protection -- more than other areas in the region.

The city had completed \$32 million worth of work on its levees between 1997 and 2004.

Since then, however, engineering standards for levees became more stringent, rainfall and storm patterns altered assumptions about potential floods, and Hurricane Katrina touched off a wave of awareness about flood risks -- all of which led West Sacramento to re-evaluate its levees.

The city now is taking a double-barrel approach to solving its flood threats, asking not only existing property owners, but also new developments to chip in.

On Wednesday, the West Sacramento City Council gave initial approval to imposing fees on new developments for flood control improvements.

The proposed new assessment on existing properties is being handled through the West Sacramento Flood Control Agency, a joint powers authority.

The Draft Engineer's Report, found at [www.westsacflood-protection.com](http://www.westsacflood-protection.com), lays out the general nature of the work the assessment would cover, what it would cost, and how individual assessments would be calculated.

In all, West Sacramento needs \$400 million in levee improvements to achieve 200-year protection.

The new district would raise \$42 million, the developer fees another \$42 million, and the rest would come from state and federal sources, the report said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The owners of 15,000 parcels in West Sacramento, including 12,000 single-family residences, will be asked to approve the assessments, said Shanna Zuspan, a West Sacramento redevelopment program manager.

Under the direct benefit approach of the new district, individual assessments would vary depending on the depth of potential flooding and size and type of property. ###

### **Sacramento Schools May Be Paying For Levee Repairs**

**CBS Channel 13 (Sacramento) – 4/12/07**

**By Rafer Weigel, reporting**

(CBS13) SACRAMENTO The Sacramento Unified School District could have to shell out big bucks to repair levees. Money for books and supplies would instead have to go to fix levee. This will probably surprise some taxpayers. It may come down to if taxpayers have to spend money in order to save money.

140,000 ballots went out and 107 went to the Sacramento Unified School District. Officials will gather to decide to vote yes or no to hold schools to the tune of \$362,000. That money, which is going to come directly out of the district's budget, can cut down on things like money for after school programs, lunches, and buses.

This vote will be part of larger city efforts to raise money city wide, to help \$17-billion in federal funds. If this seems like a lot of money, a flood in Sacramento can do over \$50-billion in damages.

"As it has been seen in Katrina, communities are wiped out, it's a disaster. So we think the risk is high," said Stien Buer, Director of SAFCA.

The public meeting was at the La Serna Center in South Sacramento. It was open to the public. Engineers say in five year, if repairs aren't done, insurance rates will likely go up. The dead line for the vote is April 18th. They should have a decision by tonight

Nobody has questioned if we need the levees, but taking the money from schools has some wondering what's going on. The good news is, even if they vote 'No', that's only 107 votes of 140,000 votes and the measure could still pass. ###

### **Bill would make cities consider flood risk plans; Part of legislative package by Wolk, stalled last year**

**Woodland Daily Democrat – 4/12/07**

The State Assembly's Local Government Committee voted 4-2 Wednesday to approve legislation requiring local flood planning.

"AB 162 will make the connection between community planning and the threat of flooding," said the bill's author, 8th District Assemblywoman Lois Wolk. "The bill rectifies a glaring omission in current law, calling on local governments to consider flood risk in their general plans, just as they are currently required to consider the risk of earthquake and fire. This requires that local governments are fully informed when making land use decisions."

AB 162 addresses the disconnect between state flood protection and local land use planning by requiring local governments to incorporate flood planning requirements in their general plans.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The bill is identical to Wolk's AB 802, part of a package of Assembly flood protection legislation that stalled last year in the Senate. AB 802 was unopposed, as is AB 162, part of Wolk's current package of flood protection legislation.

Current law is explicit regarding planning requirements for areas prone to earthquakes or fire hazards. Yet the law is silent on specific requirements to assess the possibilities of floods - despite the fact that floods are the most common natural disaster in the country, and 40 percent of the nation's catastrophic flood risk is in California.

"AB 162 is a straightforward yet necessary step towards protecting our communities," said Wolk.

Among those testifying in support of the bill was Julia Maclay, speaking on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

"We believe this bill will significantly advance the cause of integrating flood management in land use planning decisions," she said.

AB 162, which will next be heard in the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee, is also supported by the American Planning Association, California Central Valley Flood Control Association, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Planning and Conservation League, Regional Council of Rural Counties, and Sierra Club California. ###

### **West Sac council OKs developer levee fees**

***Sacramento Bee* – 4/12/07**

**By Lakiesha McGee, staff writer**

The West Sacramento City Council unanimously supported an ordinance Wednesday night for fees on construction for which the developer chooses not to meet the city's standard for flood protection.

The amount of the in-lieu fees will be determined during a second reading of the ordinance April 18.

"We made flood protection our No. 1 priority, and now we need to move quickly on this," Vice Mayor Oscar Villegas said.

The fees would help raise about \$42 million for levee repairs to help provide a 200-year level of flood protection, which will cost an estimated \$400 million, according to a city report.

The city wants to raise \$42 million more through property assessments and secure most of the funds from state and federal sources.

New federal levee criteria and heightened interest in flood protection after Hurricane Katrina led the city to reassess its flood-control system.

The city's goal is for levees to hold back huge storms with a 1-in-200 chance of occurring in any given year.

Studies were conducted on almost 45 miles of levees protecting West Sacramento from the Sacramento River, Yolo Bypass and other bodies of water.

Preliminary results suggest the city has less protection than previously believed. The final study results will be released today and posted at [www.westsacfloodprotection.com](http://www.westsacfloodprotection.com), flood protection manager Willard Chow said.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Many at the meeting Wednesday supported developer fees to help fund levee improvements. The fees would be an option for developers rather than making costly physical improvements. However, the city was warned that it may risk its ability to attract development.

"I think the in-lieu fee sounds reasonable because we all have to pay our fair share," said Ardie Zahedani of the North State Building Industry Association. "We may have to look at the city's fee structure as a whole to maintain competitiveness."

Councilman Mark Johannessen voiced concern that the city was rushing the matter without the fee amounts. He said the "timing may be premature" and suggested seeing how voters respond to the proposed assessment first.

Villegas said: "By doing nothing we do nothing to make ourselves any safer." ###

### **West Sac eyes flood fees for some homes**

***Sacramento Bee – 4/9/07***

**By Lakiesha McGhee, staff writer**

The West Sacramento City Council will consider a proposed ordinance Wednesday requiring flood control fees for new developments that don't meet the city's flood safety standards.

The city wants to increase its flood protection standards to a 200-year level of flood protection. It would cost about \$400 million, a new city report says.

The new fees would raise \$42 million for the work.

Another \$42 million would come from a proposed new assessment on existing properties.

The bulk of the cost would be covered by state and federal sources.

"This is a major policy change," Mayor Christopher Cabaldon said last week. "But we have to continue economic activity. We can't shut down."

Cabaldon was responding to residents' fears that the city is putting more people at risk by allowing developers to build before achieving the higher level of flood protection.

The goal would be for levees to hold back huge storms with a 1 in 200 chance of occurring in any given year.

West Sacramento is surrounded on all sides by levees, protecting the city from the Sacramento River to the east and the Sacramento and Yolo bypasses to the north and west.

And the deepwater channel defines its western boundary and cuts across the middle of town.

Over the past two decades, West Sacramento has improved its levees, but preliminary levee assessments indicate the level of flood protection is less than previously believed.

Since Hurricane Katrina, there is concern its levees may not meet new criteria set by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

City Flood Protection Manager Willard Chow said that without the ordinance, developers will be hard-pressed to demonstrate that they meet the city's regulations based on current federal criteria, state standards and local levee conditions.

"The ordinance allows more development to be feasible if it does not call for more development than allotted in the general plan," Chow said.

Some residents at the meeting questioned the strategy.

"How can you let building happen when you don't know the status of the levees?" asked resident Pat Flint.

She suggested the ordinance not be adopted until the council has information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency about new levee criteria.

Resident Dani Langford said that adding more development and people increases the risk. "We can't justify building because we need the money for our levees," Langford said.

Councilman Mark Johannessen said development and levee improvements will occur over time.

However, he expressed concern the city would be "double dipping" by charging developers an assessment for the land and an in lieu developer fee.

"We may be finding that we're becoming economically uncompetitive and not see the type of development we are expecting," he said.

Cabaldon said there is no viable alternative to get the level of safety needed for the community.

He added that a moratorium on building would impact all property values.

"The framework for the ordinance makes sense, but we will probably have debate over the amount of the developer fees," Cabaldon said.

The amount of the fee will be presented April 18 in a council workshop focused on geotechnical studies of the levees, Chow said.

A second reading of the ordinance also will be held April 18. ###

### **Tree-laden levees flunk federal inspection; State seeks compromise to save riverside habitat** ***Sacramento Bee* – 4/7/07**

**By Matt Weiser, staff writer**

A national directive by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers could devastate scenery and wildlife habitat in California by forcing Central Valley flood control officials to chop down virtually all trees and shrubs on their levees.

A compromise is being negotiated, but unless the policy changes, tree-lined banks on 1,600 miles of levees in the Valley could be transformed into barren culverts within a year.

"It's hard to say how draconian these measures will be," said Gary Hobgood, an environmental scientist with the California Department of Fish and Game. "As it stands now, California has lost 97 percent of its riparian habitat since the arrival of Europeans. So we're down to this last thread of habitat."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

The conflict highlights a difficult dance by federal and state officials who must weigh the need for no-frills flood control and California's tradition of also using levees for environmental protection and visual esthetics.

"Let's not forget we are a very proud city of trees. Now they're trying to take this away from us," said Sacramento artist Gregory Kondos, whose paintings of tree-dappled levees have earned him a worldwide following. "We're going to lose a landmark. It's not going to be anything that we can be proud of."

At issue is a national Corps of Engineers policy now being applied in California. It requires levees to be cleared of all vegetation to preserve channel capacity and allow access for inspection and repair. The policy is largely based on conditions on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, where ample wildlife habitat exists between levees and the water's edge.

But in California, levees were built close together after the Gold Rush to create high water velocities to flush mining debris out of rivers. In most areas, there is little space between levees and the water, and vegetation on levees provides the only riverside habitat.

The issue first came to light in February 2007 when the corps released a national list of levees that failed maintenance standards. That review was ordered by Congress after deadly levee failures in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina.

A revised list released Monday shows that 32 levee districts in California failed maintenance standards.

The list is likely to grow. Many Valley levee districts have yet to be evaluated against the national policy, including those in Sacramento, where tree-shaded levees help define the urban experience.

Hobgood said riverside habitat is essential to a variety of wildlife, from providing nesting sites for birds to giving shelter and shade for fish in the rivers. The corps' maintenance manual for the Sacramento River flood control system actually encourages planting vegetation on levees.

"We have coordinated with environmental agencies for a number of years now to incorporate vegetation in our flood control systems to provide shade and habitat for endangered species here in California," said Jim Sandner, operations and readiness chief at the Sacramento Corps of Engineers district.

Dana Cruikshank, a spokesman at the agency's headquarters in Washington, said an exemption is not in the works for California. But the corps is drafting a new national standard to allow some vegetation on levees. That standard should be finished by year-end.

"Mostly very small brush, very small trees in some circumstances, could remain," Cruikshank said, "but not anything beyond a very small tree. And of course there will be some spots where there would be no vegetation at all."

The corps' regional commander, Brig. Gen. John McMahon, said Friday that removing trees won't necessarily make levees safer, because rotting roots left behind could provide a path for seepage that could compromise the levee.

McMahon hopes to tailor the forthcoming standard to California's needs. The goal, for instance, would be to remove trees where levee-strengthening is needed, but also to allow some vegetation where strength is not a concern.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"There's no doubt in my mind our headquarters would like one standard applied broadly across the full spectrum of levees," said McMahon. "I personally don't think that's the right tack to take in this situation. Not all vegetation on levees is bad."

Until the new standard is released, local corps officials are telling levee districts not to cut trees.

But time is running out: Local levee districts have three months to develop a plan to satisfy the corps, then nine months to carry it out.

If they fail to comply, districts will be ineligible for federal assistance to repair levees after a flood. Because most districts can't afford repairs on their own, the burden could fall on state and local taxpayers.

To make matters worse, local districts are squeezed by other rules that protect vegetation, said Mike Hardesty, president of the Central Valley Flood Control Association. If they remove all trees and shrubs, as the corps headquarters wants, they could face penalties from other state and federal agencies for destroying habitat.

The state Department of Water Resources next week will launch a routine spring inspection of Central Valley levees. It has increased its inspection staff from six to nine people to measure the habitat that would be lost if the current national policy is ultimately enforced.

Jeremy Arrich, chief of Water Resources' flood project integrity and inspection branch, said the goal is to persuade the Corps of Engineers to consider natural resources in its maintenance policies. Without that consideration, he said, many of Sacramento's urban levees are likely to fail the national policy when next evaluated by the corps.

The result could be an end to the gently shaded levees that have characterized the region for generations.

"Those beautiful trees, to me, are Sacramento," said Kondos. "If we can't protect that, there's something wrong with our world." ###

### **Fed rule threatening trees, shrubs on Calif. levees**

***Associated Press – 4/7/07***

SACRAMENTO -- An Army Corps of Engineers policy is threatening trees and shrubs on 1,600 miles of Central Valley levees.

The policy requires levees to be cleared of all vegetation to preserve channel capacity and allow access for inspections and repairs.

It's based largely on conditions along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, where levees were built back from the rivers and there is ample wildlife habitat between the levees and the water's edge.

But levees were built close to the water in California to create high water velocity to wash mining debris out of the rivers following the Gold Rush.

Removing trees and shrubs from the California levees would create barren culverts, critics of the federal policy say.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

"Let's not forget we are a proud city of trees," said Gregory Kondos, a Sacramento artist whose paintings of tree-lined levees have earned him a following. "We are going to lose a landmark. It's not going to be anything we can be proud of."

Spokesman Dana Cruikshank said the corps is drafting a new national policy that would allow some small trees and shrubs to remain.

"Mostly very small brush, very small trees in some circumstances could remain, but not anything beyond a very small tree," he said. "And of course there will be some spots where there would be no vegetation at all."

Brig. Gen. John McMahon, a regional commander for the corps in California, said he hopes to persuade officials to tailor the new national policy to meet California's needs.

"There is no doubt in my mind our headquarters would like one standard applied broadly across the full spectrum of levees," he said. "I personally don't think that's the right tack to take in this situation. Not all vegetation on levees is bad."

McMahon thinks the new policy should allow trees to remain where levee strengthening is not an issue.

Local levee districts that fail to comply with the corps' policy would not be eligible for federal assistance to repair levees after a flood.

Mike Hardesty, president of the Central Valley Flood Control Association, said removing levee vegetation could get levee districts in trouble with other state and federal agencies for destroying habitat.

"It's hard to say how draconian these (vegetation removal) measures will be," said Gary Hobgood, an environmental scientist with the California Department of Fish and Game. "As it stands now, California has lost 97 percent of its riparian habitat since the arrival of Europeans. So we're down to this last thread of habitat." ###

### **Rule Threatens Trees Along California Levees**

***CBS Channel 13 (Sacramento) – 4/7/07***

(AP) SACRAMENTO An Army Corps of Engineers policy is threatening trees and shrubs on 16-hundred miles of Central Valley levees.

The policy requires levees to be cleared of all vegetation to preserve channel capacity and allow access for inspections and repairs.

It's based largely on conditions along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, where levees were built back from the rivers and there is ample wildlife habitat between the levees and the water's edge.

But levees were built close to the water in California to create high water velocity to wash mining debris out of the rivers following the Gold Rush.

Critics say removing trees and shrubs from the California levees would create barren culverts.

A regional corps commander says he's trying to persuade national officials to allow trees to remain where levee repairs are not an issue. ###

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

### EDITORIALS:

#### **Letters to the Editor: Dry California: closed for business**

***Tracy Press – 4/12/07***

#### **By Roy Ashburn, R-Bakersfield, represents Tulare, Kern, Inyo and San Bernardino counties in the state Senate**

The Central Valley was transformed from a semi-arid, desert-like region to the agricultural wonder it is today by simply adding water. The State Water Project, operated by the Department of Water Resources, provides water to more than 23 million Californians and more than 750,000 acres of the nation's most productive agricultural land.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger toured the Central Valley this month, calling for billions in badly needed funding for more dams, more water storage and improvements to the Delta. The governor noted that "as the nation's largest single source of drinking water, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta supplies 25 million people in California, which is two-thirds of the population, with water. ... The Delta is the lifeblood of our \$32 billion agriculture industry, irrigating millions of acres of highly productive farmland."

However, one judge has taken steps to change all that with the stroke of a pen. In ruling on a lawsuit over "endangered" fish sometimes caught in the pumping mechanism at the Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant near Tracy, Alameda County Judge Frank Roesch chose to rule on a semantic technicality, making demands that will shut down the flow of water through the Central Valley within 60 days.

The judge's ruling highlights the underlying problem that the state faces in providing water to our vast population and teeming economy. We can spend billions on water infrastructure projects, but if we haven't addressed the consequences of the California Environmental Quality Act along with the many endangered species laws and regulatory hurdles to the storage and transfer of water in our state, those efforts will be futile. The lawsuit and the judge's decision highlight the ultimate trade-off between extreme environmental measures and everyday life in California. The conflict is not new. This battle of priorities has served to stifle agricultural production and economic growth in our state for several decades.

The Banks Pumping Plant is the very heart of the State Water Project, pumping our state's lifeblood in canals to cities in the Bay Area, farms in the Central Valley and all of Southern California. Without this precious water, farming, business and daily life in California will grind to a halt.

The issue that Roesch ruled on was whether the Department of Water Resources has obtained an official permit known as a "take" permit for the protected fish that are sometimes swallowed by the pumps. Take permits are usually required by private property owners, corporations or local government projects where protected species are occasionally killed in the normal course of business. The operation of the Banks Pumping Plant is already under state and federal environmental regulations. The Department of Water Resources has also entered into agreements with state and federal agencies to provide a number of fishery protections, many of those agreements voluntarily.

In short, the loss of occasional protected fish is not news, and the authorities have been working closely with the Department of Water Resources to monitor these accidental losses. In fact, the court did not find that the pumping plant was causing any harm.

The only transgression is that the Department of Water Resources was not holding one kind of permit.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Both the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Game agree that 60 days is not enough time to process the permit that the judge is looking for. In the lawsuit, no one was able to demonstrate any harm to California's fish populations, yet the harm to our state's economy, jobs and way of life will be severe.

Clearly, the governor understands the critical need to keep water flowing across the Central Valley, and therefore the seriousness of this misguided court decision. As California's head of state, he has the ability to direct both the Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Game to take immediate steps toward a solution. One proposal is for Fish and Game to issue a temporary permit for the entire State Water Project to solve this and any other similar legal conflicts that could erupt in the immediate future.

Resolving the Banks Pumping Plant case is necessary, but it ultimately will not solve the larger problem. This case is a wake-up call for serious reform of the California Environmental Quality Act and endangered species laws with respect to the transport and storage of our state's lifeblood. Without sufficient water, we might as well hang a "Closed for Business" sign at California's borders. ###

### **Editorial: The Valley's liquid asset** ***Pasadena Star News – 4/11/07***

DROUGHT-stricken Southern California got some good news Tuesday: The aquifer beneath the San Gabriel Valley expanded by two inches due to excessive ground-water recharge.

The San Gabriel Basin actually pushed up and out when rainwater and snowmelt from a wet 2005 engorged the underground lake.

While water experts predict this won't last, the glass-half-full lesson is this: We are sitting on the San Gabriel Valley's best attribute. The underground basin or aquifer can hold about 2.8 trillion gallons of fresh water, that's more than twice the amount used by all Southlanders every year.

While Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the state Legislature focus on getting more water from the Sacramento Delta, or building more above-ground reservoirs, they miss the fact that we already have the most vast "reservoir" in the state, a natural one that exists underground, one that doesn't need a huge investment of expensive steel-and-concrete supports, one in which the water it holds is not subject to evaporation.

The importance of the San Gabriel Basin aquifer cannot be over emphasized. It is a vast, strategic resource, not only for the approximately 2million San Gabriel Valley residents, but it could one day be used to supply water to other regions in California.

The local aquifer is not used up to its potential for a couple reasons. First, pockets are polluted from industrial solvents, dry cleaning fluids and rocket-fuel carelessly spilled into the drinking water source by hundreds of companies for the past 60 years.

For our own water security, and to put the San Gabriel aquifer in play in the state's water supply solution, cleanup of the basin must be fully funded. While the Congress has supplied federal dollars to this goal, the state has contributed few dollars toward this end. It makes sense that the governor's proposed 2008 ballot measure that would allocate \$4.5 billion in bonds for new water storage include cleanup, recharge and delivery systems for the San Gabriel Basin aquifer.

Second, if the aquifer is to be used more efficiently, there needs to be more spreading grounds and recharge of both local and imported water.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Currently, water from the State Water Project is piped into our basin about 30-60 days out of the year, when an excess is available. The state should invest in piping in more water from the Delta to store in the San Gabriel Basin and eventually, to sell to other agencies during times of need.

While use of the aquifer to meet other areas' water demands would require a large investment, it should be considered as part of the solution for the state's water needs. ###

### **Editorial: Water foresight**

***Riverside Press Enterprise – 4/11/07***

A future of hotter weather and water shortages does not have to mean catastrophe for California. But it will require changing long-held water habits at the state, local and individual levels. And while such changes may be difficult, or even painful, the alternative is much worse.

A report released last week by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change clearly explains the stakes for California.

By mid-century, arid regions such as California could see a 10 percent to 30 percent decrease in available water. And the report finds at least a 90 percent certainty that "warming in western (North American) mountains is projected to cause decreased snowpack, more winter flooding, and reduced summer flows, exacerbating competition for over-allocated water resources."

Such changes would have profound effects on California, a prospect that demands civic attention. The state depends heavily on the Sierra snowpack to store water for the dry summer months. Winter storms that bring rain instead of snow mean that the water runs off during the wet season, instead of lingering as snowpack until warmer weather.

To start addressing these dynamics, California should devise ways to catch and use storm water, a necessity as the snowpack diminishes. Gov. Schwarzenegger's proposal to build two new dams faces strong opposition and an uncertain future, but a renewed legislative focus on water storage would be vital and timely.

Local and regional water agencies can also help stockpile water. Efforts to boost water storage in the Chino and Beaumont basins, for example, can accommodate growth while hedging against drought.

And conservation can pay enormous water dividends. City and county policies that encourage water-efficient development can stretch supplies through water-saving appliances, drought-resistant landscaping and irrigation with recycled water. And every Californian can take such basic steps as turning off lawn sprinklers during rainy weather and fixing leaky faucets.

A drier climate and shrinking water supplies pose big challenges. But Californians are better off pursuing solutions now, rather than waiting until a crisis descends. ###

### **Column: Water may nourish the Valley's economy**

***Fresno Bee – 4/8/07***

**By Bill McEwen, columnist**

I have terrible news for people who wake up complaining about Fresno.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

After decades of missed hunches, high unemployment and low wages, we're on the verge of economic revolution.

This is a bold opinion that could bite me many times before I retire my keyboard -- but I don't think it will.

What's different about where our region and our economy are headed?

Instead of wasting money trying to lure companies here, we're investing in growing our own businesses.

This strategy not only is cost-effective, but the creation of home-grown publicly traded companies would transform Central California for the better in dozens of ways.

An example with big potential: businesses that move, manipulate and master water.

California's shared history is ag. Then, in the 20th century, entertainment gave Los Angeles sizzle, microprocessors launched Silicon Valley into the stratosphere and biotech made the world beat a path to San Diego.

Water isn't sexy. But it's scarce. And it'll be in even shorter supply as countries such as China and India prosper and cities such as Las Vegas boom during global climate change.

"Saving water" will become a universal mantra -- if it hasn't already -- and who better to show the world than the people of the San Joaquin Valley, the same people who made a desert bloom?

"There is no doubt that water is going to be the issue of the future and we're going to be instrumental in the industry," says Tim Stearns, director of the Lyles Center for Innovations and Entrepreneurship at Fresno State.

"It may not grow as fast as Silicon Valley, but it's going to grow to the same magnitude. There's no downside in terms of relevance and growth."

What is water technology?

It's splash parks, solar-water pumps and sensors that say when to apply water to crops. It's devices that purify, test for pollutants and solve waste-water treatment problems. It's flow meters, tanks and oil/water separators.

It would've been nice if we had honed in on our water expertise earlier and not tried to mimic everybody else. Credit goes to Doug Henton, founder of Silicon Valley-based Collaborative Economics, for waking us to the obvious several years ago.

"Doug came to speak at a breakfast, and everyone was expecting to have a nice conversation," Stearns says. "Instead, he said, 'You guys are in serious trouble. The economic model you have in place doesn't compute. But you've got something right here in your backyard, a technology with potential for growth.'"

"He clearly had done his homework, and it resonated with a number of people in the community who said we have to do something about this."

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Henton's frank words inspired the formation of the Fresno Area Collaborative Regional Initiative, which spawned the Regional Jobs Initiative. Politicians scoffed and skeptics yawned, but the team approach and focusing on business clusters is working.

There are 120 water-technology companies in the region, according to Craig Scharton, chief executive of the Central Valley Business Incubator, and they are leading -- along with energy-technology companies -- a new wave of innovation.

The marriage of water and energy is apt, Scharton says, because 20% of the energy consumed in California goes to pump water from the ground or move it over the Tehachapi mountains.

"Usually we'd say we are going to be the best, and we'd be copying somebody else," Scharton says. "This is something authentic."

The whole history of the Valley is water technology. We were already doing it, but nobody had linked them up before."

What, exactly, is linking?

"Joint marketing efforts, trade missions, sharing information about vendors and working with the Workforce Investment Board to develop an employee base," Scharton says. "None of that was happening before."

Five companies already are in the new \$4 million Claude Laval Water and Energy Technology Incubator at Fresno State.

Another five are headquartered at the business incubator. Some of the technologies being pursued would save water and reduce air pollution -- a marriage with huge economic and health payoffs.

"In these two buildings are businesses that someday will be \$100 million- and \$200 million-a-year companies," Scharton says.

A private business incubator in Clovis, CargoBay, quickly filled its 50 offices and is building another 22 units in a five-building complex called Portal Sierra in the Clovis research and technology park.

Creating these incubators required vision, lobbying and teamwork from leaders in private and public sectors.

Other people would be smart to get on this path to prosperity. The signposts are water, energy, technology, education and collaboration. ###

### **Guest Column: County's voice must be heard; Fate of the Delta crucial to those who live here *Stockton Record* – 4/8/07**

**By Michael Machado, California state senator, Linden**

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has been the subject of debate since migrants began to reclaim it in the 1800s for its pure beauty and abundant natural resource: water.

The California Aqueduct transports and pumps much of the Delta's water over the grapevine and into Southern California. The burgeoning East Bay population similarly strains the Delta's precious and limited resource.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

As an elected representative of San Joaquin County, I've followed water policy for 30 years and have watched helplessly as Northern and Southern California wage perennial water wars.

As California's population increases, it's time for those in San Joaquin County, home of the Delta, to participate actively in deciding the Delta's future.

Who allows Delta water to flow and who decides where?

CalFed, a collection of state and federal agencies and water stakeholders, was formed to address the Delta's environmental, water quality and supply and sustainability issues.

Unfortunately, due to increased political pressure from Southern California water exporters and northern Delta developers, CalFed hasn't been effective.

To reinvigorate interest in the Delta and address its increasing fragility due to development, Gov. Schwarzenegger formed a blue-ribbon committee to develop a new Delta vision by December.

Although post-partisan and progressive in thought, the committee benefits all interested parties except the Delta and San Joaquin County.

It's supported by a 41-member force of Northern and Southern California water exporters, special interests and developers. It includes only two San Joaquin County representatives.

Since San Joaquin County contains the majority of the Delta, this is where the greatest impact from further water export and development will be felt.

It's bewildering to think such talks might decide the future of our region and we're not even included. Without our participation, I fear no new ideas will be generated and no progress toward preserving the Delta will be made.

Should we let the Delta's most precious resource flow with the tide of the market to the highest bidder?

What about protecting arid and crowded Southern California's historical claim through a secure canal? Or should we say the truly sustainable option is allowing the Delta to return to its natural state?

Interested parties pose these questions time and again.

All parties must be present when determining the Delta's fate and deciding what entity is best suited to manage such an integral part of California's infrastructure.

Californians depend on the railroads, gas lines, levee system, and, of course, the water that runs through the Delta.

The Delta is important. We can't allow Northern and Southern California's special interests to amass water for their constituents.

Water isn't pork barrel. It's a precious and limited public resource that must be treated with respect.

We need to address the California population's water quality and supply needs while preserving the Delta's ecological and economical future.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

It's a shame that water and economic interests outside the Delta focus more on what they believe they should have rather than preserving and sharing the resource today and in the future.

We don't have to repeat our mistakes of the past.

It's time to fight for vision and leadership. ###

**Guest Column: As Sacramento fiddles, the wells run dry**  
***Pasadena Star News – 4/6/07***

**By Tony Fellow, chair of the Department of Communications at California State University, Fullerton, vice chair of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and director on the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District in El Monte**

When the wells run dry, we know the cost of water," the little ditty goes. Southern Californians may soon know just how expensive its liquid gold is, thanks to Sacramento.

A colossal bureaucratic snafu in the state's capital may shut down a major artery supplying water to 25 million Californians within 60 days. Its impact could all but cripple California's economy if agencies up north don't get their act together.

Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch last week ordered the state to shut down the Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant, west of Stockton, by June if the state Department of Water Resources doesn't provide the court with the proper permits that would allow it to kill two of California's endangered species - salmon and Delta smelt.

Watershed Enforcers, a group of sport fishermen who have had it with the plant's enormous pumps sucking in and killing salmon and other fish, initiated the action against the DWR. The state agency was caught off guard - or just arrogant - not realizing it needed permits from the state's Fish and Game Commission that would allow it to kill spring and winter runs of the endangered species. DWR's response? "We believe we are in compliance with the law," DWR Deputy Nancy Saracino told State Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee Chairman Darrell Steinberg. That attitude should go over well with the judge!

The sport fishermen say that the DWR has not satisfied the mandatory requirement found in the California Endangered Species Act allowing it to take species of winter-run Chinook salmon, spring-run Chinook salmon and Delta smelt.

A lot is at stake if the judge permanently pulls the plug on the plant, which shoots some 10,688 cubic feet per second of delta water through 11 pumps into the 444-mile State Water Project aqueduct that supplies water for millions of Californians and 750,000 acres of farmlands.

The prospect of shutting down a major artery of Southern California water shook the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which gathered its executive committee together for an emergency meeting to meet the challenge of less water.

Debra Man, MWD's chief operation officer, underscored the gravity of the situation, which includes potential water shortages, putting California's agricultural industry and the state's economic vitality at stake. She said the MWD, which provides supplemental water to 18million Southern Californians, is prepared to call for voluntary conservation to reduce demand from 10 to 20 percent, as well as discontinue its water deliveries to agriculture. MWD also is prepared to take 250,000 acre-feet from its newest reservoir, Diamond Valley Lake, which stores some 755,000 acre-feet for emergencies, such as

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

earthquakes and Delta levee failure. Arrogance of state agencies, by the way, is not considered an emergency.

The mammoth water agency is also prepared to store as much water as it can get in local groundwater basins. But wait a minute, that brings up another problem. In the San Gabriel Valley - home of the state's most water-rich groundwater basin - 200 of its 400 wells have been shut down because they are tainted with volatile organic chemicals and perchlorate, a by-product of rocket fuel that can have adverse health effects. And if that isn't enough, Southern California's other water artery, the Colorado River, is threatened by hot spots of perchlorate and new findings at Topok, Ariz., of chromium VI, another chemical that could have devastating impacts on one's health. These chemicals are slowly creeping toward rivers. And let's not forget the uranium pilings sitting adjacent to the Colorado River at Moab, Utah. This major artery may be on life support if its arteries are not cleansed of what is shaping up to be a toxic cocktail.

Judge Roesch's decision also may be a blessing in disguise as the governor begins a whirlwind tour of California's water supplies, touting his water bond measure that will likely find its way on the February ballot. The measure, which calls for building new reservoirs in Northern California, is of little benefit to those in the south. What Southern California needs in that bond is millions of dollars to bring about a speedy cleanup of Southern California's wells and funds to build more recycled water projects.

The judge's actions also should be a wake-up call to California legislators who need to get their act together and come up with one comprehensive bill to solve California's water problems and begin serious discussions about California's future and her ability to sustain a growing population with dwindling natural resources. State Sen. Shelia Kuehl, by far the brightest of Sacramento's lot, has warned her colleagues that building more and more homes without assuring the reliability of water is a recipe for disaster.

In "The Tragedy of King Richard the Third," William Shakespeare writes, "The people are like water and the ruler a boat. Water can support a boat or overturn it." We may see the power of water if its rulers don't begin to steer California in the right direction as far as water policy is concerned. ###

### **Editorial: As climate changes, water policies must as well; You don't need a weather man to know which way that hot, dry wind's blowing**

***Sacramento Bee – 4/8/07***

In the Sierra Nevada, the snowpack that feeds much of California's water supply is less than half of normal for this time of year. What little white stuff has accumulated in the mountains is melting faster and earlier than usual.

At Lake Mead, which supplies water to Las Vegas, Los Angeles and other cities, this massive reservoir is 80 feet lower than its historic average. Across the Southwest, farmers and cities are scrambling to drill wells, build pipelines and take other measures to cope with a seeming drought.

Scientists can't say with certainty that such dry spells are the result of global warming, but the reports create a worrisome backdrop on which to consider the second report this year of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Released Friday, this report concluded, with 90 percent confidence, that human activity is causing global warming and that this greenhouse effect is already causing impacts across the planet.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

In general, the climatic shift is causing more rain to fall and growing seasons to lengthen in areas closer to the world's poles. It is also contributing to longer dry spells and hotter temperatures in the middle latitudes, the IPCC concluded.

The report, the work of 2,500 of the world's top scientists, poses challenges for policymakers at every level of government.

If scientific projections play out as expected, impoverished nations of the world will bear the brunt of intensified climate change, even though they are minor contributors to the problem. They will see their heavily populated coastlines inundated as sea levels rise and will face more deadly floods, droughts and changes in agriculture.

Here in California, many scientists suspect that global warming is contributing to an earlier-than-normal melt-off of Sierra snowpack, although given natural climate variability such isolated events are hard to nail down.

Scientists also see increasing evidence that the U.S. Southwest is moving toward a more arid climate, resulting in more wildfires and water shortages.

"There is a broad consensus amongst climate models that this region will dry significantly in the 21st century and that the transition to a more arid climate should already be under way," said a study published online Thursday in the journal Science.

In California, the time has long passed for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and the state to examine how they operate dams and water projects. The diagrams that determine how much water should be saved for irrigation, or released to create space for floods, are based on historical data that are losing their relevancy.

Utilities that depend on hydropower -- such as the Sacramento Municipal Utility District -- must brace for a changed future. So must farmers, fishermen, ski resorts and anyone whose livelihood relies on climate patterns of the past.

In the Legislature, there are encouraging signs of adjustment. Republican lawmakers who voted last year against California's law to reduce greenhouse gases now are touting new reservoirs as a response to climate change. We welcome the debate.

Everything must be on the table, as long as all parties recognize the obvious: Global warming is real. ###

### **Editorial: A little goes a long way**

#### ***Pasadena Star News – 4/9/07***

THE debate over global warming rages on. It's either "the greatest hoax ever perpetuated on the American people" (Sen. James M. Inhofe, R-Okla.) or "Our house is burning down and we are blind to it" (French President Jacques Chirac).

But at the same time that the global warming argument rages at lofty scientific and political levels, we are experiencing our own climate problems down here at street level.

Southern California finds itself in the midst of a drought, one that extends to the east and west slopes of the Sierra and into the Colorado River basin. And whether the cause is global warming or cyclical weather patterns, it's time for action, not words.

---

## Delta Vision News Clips

---

Consider:

The water content in the Sierra snowpack is at its lowest level in two decades, meaning that water supplies to cities and farms could be affected if conditions persist.

The Colorado River system is in the midst of one of the worst droughts in centuries.

As a result, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is pushing for a ballot measure in 2008 that would allocate \$4.5 billion in bonds for new water storage in the state.

It has been the driest winter in the Los Angeles area since records began in 1877.

If that's not enough, JPL researchers have determined that temperatures in California are on the rise, much of that attributable to urban sprawl.

If these conditions continue for one or two more decades, the situation could become dire. While prolonged droughts haven't occurred in hundreds of years, there is no guarantee it won't happen again. Mother Nature is adept at throwing curve balls.

It isn't too soon to begin practicing conservation on a personal level. It won't hurt. And it will help.

Here are some tips from conservation specialists:

Install aerators in your faucets, use high pressure showers and ultra low-flush toilets throughout your home.

Water your lawns early in the morning before sunrise or in the evenings after sunset. This will maximize water absorption into the soil and minimize loss due to evaporation.

Take short showers. Draw less water for baths. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth or shaving. Check for and fix "silent" leaks in toilets or plumbing fixtures.

Support local businesses that practice conservation. For example, commercial car washes that recycle their water; businesses that use recycled water in fountains; restaurants that serve water only on request; and hotels that give you the option of using your linens for a second night's stay.

Live like we reside on the edge of a desert - because, after all, we do. ###